



## ***Notice of a Meeting***

### **Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday, 5 September 2019 at 10.00 am**

**Rooms 1&2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

#### **Membership**

Chairman Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE

Deputy Chairman - Councillor Jenny Hannaby

#### *Councillors:*

Nick Carter  
Mike Fox-Davies  
Tony Ilott

Liz Leffman  
Charles Mathew  
Glynis Phillips

Judy Roberts  
Michael Waine  
Liam Walker

**Notes:** *A pre-meeting briefing will take place in the Members' Board Room at 9.30am on the day of the meeting.*

***Date of next meeting:*** 7 November 2019

#### **What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**

- The performance of the Council and to provide a focused review of:
  - Corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting
  - Budget scrutiny
- the performance of the Council by means of effective key performance indicators, review of key action plans and obligations and through direct access to service managers, Cabinet Members and partners;
- through call-in, the reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet;
- queries or issues of concern that may occur over decisions being taken in relation to adult social care;
- the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Crime and Justice Act 2006.

#### **How can I have my say?**

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

#### **For more information about this Committee please contact:**

Chairman	-	Councillor Liz Brighthouse E.Mail: <a href="mailto:liz.brighthouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk">liz.brighthouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Policy Officer	-	Lauren Rushen, Tel: 07990 367851 Email: <a href="mailto:lauren.rushen@oxfordshire.gov.uk">lauren.rushen@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Committee Officer	-	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Tel 07393 001096 <a href="mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk">colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

Yvonne Rees  
Chief Executive

August 2019

## About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

## About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

## What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting**

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declarations of Interest - Guidance note on back page of the agenda**
3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2019 and to receive information arising from them.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**
5. **Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

10.10

A presentation from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. The Committee will scrutinise progress against the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 and consider the 2018-19 Annual Report.

6. **Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan 2019-20**

10.40

A presentation from the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police. The Committee will scrutinise the performance of the Thames Valley Police Service in 2018-19 and areas of focus for 2019-20.

7. **Business Monitoring Report (To Follow)**

11.10

Joint report by the Assistant Chief Executive and the Director for Finance.

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities and provides an update on the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan from 1 June to 31 July. Cabinet does not formally meet in August so information from June and July is covered in this report. A summary of overall performance and description of change is contained within the report. Each month the business management report will address:

- a) Corporate performance (measured against the Thriving Oxfordshire Outcomes Framework)
- b) Risk (summary of strategic risk and other significant matters)
- c) Human Resources (summary of key data)
- d) Finance (summary including forecast outturn variance)

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report and consider any matters for future attention by the Committee.**

## 8. **Safeguarding Children (Pages 7 - 54)**

11.30

Report by the Director for Children's Services.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards were set up under the Children Act 2004 in order that agencies co-operate with each other to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The Oxfordshire Board is led by an independent chair and includes representation from all six local authorities in Oxfordshire, as well as the National Probation service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Police, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, schools and Further Education colleges, the military, the voluntary sector and lay members. In April 2019 these arrangements changed to reflect the requirements of the DfE guidance 'Working Together 2018' however these reports relate to the financial year 2018/19.

This paper highlights findings from the Board's annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire. It also includes themes from two of the Board's multi-agency subgroups: the Case Review and Governance subgroup and The Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup.

The OSCB annual report will be considered at Cabinet, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the full Council.

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note these annual reports and provide any comments.**

## 9. **Safeguarding Adults Annual Report (Pages 55 - 80)**

12.00

Report by the Deputy Director, Adult Social Care.

The OSAB is required to report annually on the work of the Board and of its partners, assessing the position of the partnerships in relation to the safeguarding adults at risk within Oxfordshire.

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) **note that the adult safeguarding partnership is working across Oxfordshire and that work undertaken by the Board and its partners has resulted in a significant decrease in safeguarding concerns being referred into the Local Authority, building on the reduction on concerns started last year; and**
- b) **note the priorities for 2019/20.**

## 10. **LUNCH**

12.30

## **11. Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report (Pages 81 - 102)**

13.15

Report by the Assistant Chief Executive

During March 2019, the Council commissioned the Local Government Association to carry out a Corporate Peer Challenge.

The feedback report from the LGA was received in July 2019 and is being shared with the Performance Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity for feedback and comment ahead of Cabinet consideration in October 2019.

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) Note the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report**
- b) Consider and comment on the recommendations made within the report**
- c) Consider whether specific recommendations should be included in the Performance Scrutiny Committee forward plan for more detailed consideration**

## **12. Development of the Corporate Plan (Pages 103 - 106)**

13.35

Report by the Assistant Chief Executive

The Corporate Plan will be reviewed for the business year 2020/21 to ensure that the document accurately reflects progress and priorities. The revised plan will be recommended to Council in February 2020 alongside Service and Resource Planning proposals. It is the intention to retain the existing vision and priorities, updated to incorporate new and emerging issues.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the development proposals for the plan and to comment on the new and prioritised issues which are being considered for inclusion or additional emphasis.

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) note the proposals for updating the current Corporate Plan for the period 2020-23; and**
- b) comment on the new and prioritised issues for consideration set out at paragraph 8.**

## **13. Impact of drug use on children and families**

14.05

The Committee will receive a presentation about the impact of drug use on children and

families and the work that the County Council does to address this particularly in relation to Child Drug Exploitation and County Lines work.

**14. Work Programme (Pages 107 - 110)**

14.20

To agree the committee's work programme for future meetings based on key priorities and discussion in the meeting.

**15. Transformation Subcommittee (Pages 111 - 116)**

**For information only** – Draft Minutes from the Transformation Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 July 2019.

## Declarations of Interest

### The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

### Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

### What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

### List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

**Employment** (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or [glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a hard copy of the document.

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## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 July 2019 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.00 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair

Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Nick Carter  
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Councillor Charles Mathew  
Councillor Glynis Phillips  
Councillor Judy Roberts  
Councillor Michael Waine  
Councillor Liam Walker

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (for Agenda Item 11)  
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services (for Agenda Item 13)

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
7	Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager; Steven Jones, Corporate Performance and Risk Manager
7, 13	Chris Hilliard, Consultant Deputy Director for Education; Jane Howarth, Head of SEND
8, 9, 10	Simon Furlong, Interim Strategic Director Communities and Chief Fire Officer
8	Andrew Fairweather, Asset and Investment Team Manager
9, 10 13	Angela Smallwood, Performance Improvement Manager Allyson Milward, Head of Access to Learning

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**30/19 ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Nick Carter moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED:** (nem con) that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**31/19 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Liz Leffman moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Jenny Hannaby be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED:** (nem con) that Councillor Jenny Hannaby be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**32/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Ilott.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Steve Harrod, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services, Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive and Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services.

**33/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA**

(Agenda No. 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

**34/19 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 5)

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

**35/19 BUSINESS MONITORING REPORT**

(Agenda No. 7)

Ben Threadgold introduced the report which was the first monthly report seen by this Committee. It outlined the situation at the end of May, focussing on Performance, Risk, HR and Finance. The Committee is seeing the report before Cabinet receives it.

Officers responded to Members' questions as follows:

- The overspend on SEND Home to School Transport was £3.4m last year and continues into this year (Paragraph 20, Page 9 of the Addenda). It is due to increased demand and complexity.
- Work on air quality is still at a formative stage. The move is towards very low or zero-emissions bus fleets. Officers are confident of staying on target.
- Officers will seek more information on the amber rating for the number of new homes (Page 12). There was a change in how the rating was assessed, rather than a reduction in the number of new homes being delivered.
- The Schools Improvement and Safeguarding teams responded immediately to the 'inadequate' ratings received by three primary schools. Officers will look at the quality of audits from schools.
- Chris Hilliard agreed to take on board the suggestion of guidance for school trustees. He said that the Council will support schools whether maintained or academies.
- There has been a countrywide rise in the number of EHCP requests. The new code of practice makes it hard to refuse. Also, the system is now covering ages 0 to 25. The team is being restructured which is designed to put more officers 'on the ground'. Consultation ends next week and it is hoped to implement it in August.
- The debt under Adult Social Care is being reduced through active management. It is now close to target.
- Overpayments, such as that made to Scope, occur only occasionally, often when the Council has not been informed of the death of a client.

**RESOLVED: to note the report.**

### **36/19 DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY** (Agenda No. 8)

Simon Furlong introduced the report. The strategy covers existing investments but also unlocks potential for wider investments. It will enable more effective use of property. A new property strategy is being developed.

Lorna Baxter corrected paragraph 2 of the report (Page 7 of the Agenda) in that this draft does not replace the current Capital and Investment Strategy but becomes part of it, if adopted by Full Council.

Officers responded to issues raised by Members as follows:

- The strategy will allow us to invest outside of Treasury Management. For example, to invest in assets that would include a social return.
- The strategy refers to the climate emergency issue on Page 9 of the Agenda where it mentions prioritising opportunities that are carbon neutral, use/generate green energy or reduce travel or waste. Members asked for the emphasis of the wording here to be strengthened.
- This draft is starting with the building blocks and more detail – such as local authority trading companies – will be developed later. Officers noted the comment that the strategy was very property-oriented.

- With regard to the procedures set out for governance of Category C investments, officers agreed to look at the existing procedures for emergency decisions.
- A number of investment items referred to in the strategy build on existing activities around our land and property assets. For example, a number of land development deals are in progress, some of them based on the old 'small holdings estate' that was deliberately retained in the 1990s. As stated in the Strategy, once these have met their current commitment to Capital Programme future proceeds can be directed into the investment portfolio. Potential projects around our property assets are expected to come through in the coming months if the strategy is approved.

Members asked how local Members would be consulted on an individual decision on a piece of land in their division. The Chairman noted that more involvement of Members was something that also came up in the Peer Review. She undertook to take this point to Cabinet.

### **37/19 COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT** (Agenda No. 9)

Simon Furlong summarised the annual report. In particular he highlighted the increased workload related to unauthorised encampments and an increasing number of wildfires.

Officers responded to comments from Members as follows:

- The Service continues to work with property owners to reduce the number of false alarms. The cost of these is particularly high in rural areas.
- The dip in the number of co-responding calls has been due to a review of ambulance response protocols as well as ongoing national negotiations over broadening the role, with unions advising their members to reduce co-responding.
- In dealing with unauthorised encampments, the first priority is safety. There are only two officers to cover all the encampments. Access can be a problem even with permanent sites.
- It was agreed to find a more representative photograph for the Gypsy and Traveller Service section of the report and to remove the reference to the nationality of a group of Traveller families.

**RESOLVED: to approve publication of this Annual Report 2018/19 with the changes agreed at this meeting.**

### **38/19 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REPORT ON OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2019** (Agenda No. 10)

Simon Furlong introduced the report. This was the first inspection of its type for the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. OFRS was the first County Council service to receive a rating of at least 'Good' across all areas.

Simon Furlong responded to Members' questions as follows:

- The service's education programme promotes the fire service as a good career available to all emphasising that it is not just about fire-fighting.
- The 'requires improvement' rating on 'Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies' is related to aging computers and some paperwork not up to date. These computers are being replaced with tablets.
- The 'requires improvement' rating on 'Managing performance and developing leaders' results from what the inspectorate thought was insufficient appraisal of on-call staff. The OFRS concern is that too high a proportion of time for on-call staff would be spent on appraisals.
- The Inspectorate has proposed to have one more full round of appraisals followed by themed inspections. This depends on commissioning by the Home Office.
- The most senior female in OFRS is an Area Manager. It is hoped that this will encourage women in the operational side to go for promotion. At the recent women's cycle race the female members of the service were given more prominence.

The Chairman noted that this was Simon Furlong's last time before the Committee as Chief Fire Officer. She thanked him on behalf of the Committee for all his work in that position.

### **39/19 YOUNG CARERS DEEP DIVE - NEXT STEPS**

(Agenda No. 11)

The report was introduced by Councillor Nick Carter, Chairman of the working group. He stated that the recommendations had not changed since the first report went to Cabinet. They were all still valid.

Since the first report was published Healthwatch have completed an investigation into support for young carers in Oxford city which highlighted similar issues.

Members questioned whether the Committee should send the same recommendations to Cabinet again and discussed other ways in which the objectives could be pursued.

Councillor Michael Waine agreed to ask the Education Scrutiny Committee to take recommendations (e) to (h) onto their agenda.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, agreed to raise the issue of identifying young carers with school nurses as well as the drug and alcohol services.

Councillor Carter drew attention to the fact that Be Free Young Carers can only provide a service to young carers in the South and Vale districts which is why he believes that Cabinet should explore ways of helping them to expand.

The Chairman also proposed that the Committee should discuss resources for the Family Solutions Service before that is finalised.

It was agreed that the Committee would review progress against the recommendations at a future meeting.

**40/19 EXEMPT ITEM**  
(Agenda No. 12)

**41/19 SEND HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CABINET ADVISORY GROUP**  
(Agenda No. 13)

The Chairman noted that the Annexes to the report were exempt but that she did not expect any discussion on them so that the meeting could continue in public.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services, introduced the report from the Cabinet Advisory Group. She stated that the Group had identified other ways of making the required saving of £300,000 without any change to the Home to School Transport Policy.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale thanked the special schools that had been very supportive and helpful in achieving the savings

Allyson Milward added that the provision of transport for after-school activities – which was really respite care – had not been part of the policy and had not been very transparent. The new proposal is to set up a separate budget for that with parents /carers invited to apply for a bursary in the following academic year on an annual basis - such applications to be assessed and allocated against a cash limited sum.

The Chairman thanked the members of the Cabinet Advisory Group for their work on this issue which had not only achieved savings but had provided a better service for the children.

**42/19 COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Agenda No. 14)

It was agreed that the Adult and Children Safeguarding reports, on the Work Programme for the November meeting, needed to be brought forward to the September meeting. The Committee had also been asked to look at a Serious Case Review. It agreed to extend the 5 September Committee meeting to finish at 2.30 or 3pm due to the length of the agenda.

Members expressed concern that the final report of the Peer Review had still not been received. It was agreed that the Committee needed to scrutinise the Action Plan from the review.

It was agreed that the air quality issue could be taken with the Transport Plan at the November meeting. It was also suggested that the items on Investment Strategy and Income Generation could be taken together.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing ..... 20

Division(s):

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 September 2019

### Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board – Annual Reports

#### Report by Director for Children's Services

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note these annual reports and provide any comments.

#### Executive Summary

2. Local Safeguarding Children Boards were set up under the Children Act 2004 in order that agencies co-operate with each other to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The Oxfordshire Board is led by an independent chair and includes representation from all six local authorities in Oxfordshire, as well as the National Probation service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Police, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, schools and Further Education colleges, the military, the voluntary sector and lay members. In April 2019 these arrangements changed to reflect the requirements of the DfE guidance 'Working Together 2018' however these reports relate to the financial year 2018/19.
3. This paper presents three annual reports: the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Annual (OSCB) Report; Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance Annual Report and the Case Review and Governance Annual Report.
4. The OSCB Annual Report sets out report sets out the challenges that the safeguarding partners have faced in terms of the ongoing demand on the system with neglect being a key feature; the need to keep children safe in full-time education and the contextual safeguarding risks that exist for children outside of their home environment. The report also highlights a number of examples of good practice including work around child exploitation.
5. The Performance Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup scrutinises the effectiveness of safeguarding practice. This annual report summarises the common themes for learning and improvement to support vulnerable children.
6. The Case Review and Governance Annual report summarises the learning from four serious case reviews.

## Introduction

7. Richard Simpson (OSCB Independent Chair), Lara Patel (Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Children, Education and Families) and Tan Lea (Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager, Children, Education and Families) will present a paper on **three** annual reports from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The reports concern an overview of safeguarding work; serious case reviews and quality assurance.

## Background

8. Local Safeguarding Children Boards were set up under the Children Act 2004 in order that agencies co-operate with each other to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
9. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OCSB) is led by an independent chair and includes representation from all six local authorities in Oxfordshire, as well as the National Probation service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Police, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, schools and Further Education colleges, the military, the voluntary sector and lay members.
10. The Board is funded through a partnership arrangement and meets 4 times per year. The Board is supported by a Business Unit located within Oxfordshire County Council. The board has two joint meetings with the Safeguarding Adults board per year. In 2018/19 there were three area groups to ensure good communication lines to frontline practitioners.
11. The Board has a series of multi-agency subgroups, each of which produce an annual report. This paper includes annual reports produced by two the subgroups working on learning and improvement in safeguarding practice: the Case Review and Governance subgroup and The Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup.
12. It should be noted that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for the Board were revised in May 2019 in accordance with the requirements set out by the DfE guidance, Working Together 2018. However the reporting period for these reports was not affected by any of these changes.

## OSCB Annual Report

13. The key purpose of the **OSCB Annual Report** is to assess the impact of the Board's work in 2018/19 on:
  - service quality and effectiveness
  - safeguarding outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire.
14. The report evaluates performance against the priorities that are set out in the Business Plan for the year and against other statutory functions that the LSCB must undertake.



15. The report sets out the challenges that the safeguarding partners have faced in terms of the ongoing demand on the system with neglect being a key feature; the need to keep children safe in full-time education and the contextual safeguarding risks that exist for children outside of their home environment. The Board has also been concerned with supporting transgender children; improving specialist placements for those in care and those with serious mental health needs as well as supporting good access for all children with emotional and mental health needs to CAMHS help.
16. There are many good examples of safeguarding work within the partnership. Partners have made good progress to tackle child exploitation. Drug exploitation in particular is an area of growing concern. The board has set up a partnership structure and screening tool to identify and support children. Partners have increased the uptake of multi-agency chronologies that ensure that there is a full picture of a child's life, that joint working makes a difference. Partners have got a tighter grip of the information on those children on reduced timetables, excluded from school or not attending and board members have met with headteachers to get sign up to keeping children safe in education.
17. As a result of OSCB work: Thames Valley Police reported an increase in uptake by schools of 'Operation Encompass' from 48% to 94%. (This system alerts schools if the child has been in the home when a domestic abuse incident has taken place in the family home the evening/ night before school). Children's Social care has developed a practice handbook to set out expectations and guidance for workers with respect to good supervision and the inclusion of children's views. The Clinical Commissioning Group has worked with GP practices to develop improvement plans for safeguarding work. Oxford Health NHS FT's recording systems include prompts to include and flag safeguarding information.
18. In 2018/19 the OSCB delivered over 150 free safeguarding training and learning events plus online learning. The training reached over 11,000 members of the Oxfordshire workforce:
- ✓ 5,017 multi-agency practitioners undertook face-face training
  - ✓ 6,497 multi-agency practitioners have undertaken e-learning
- The OSCB ran a wide range of training to cover not just core safeguarding and early help but also working with fathers, supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people as well as digital safety.
19. The OSCB delivered termly updates over 4000 members of the workforce and e-bulletins to educational settings across the county. In the coming year the OSCB will launch and update website and twitter feed. Learning and improvement events for approximately 150 delegates each time have covered:
- Child drug exploitation: identifying and responding to it
  - Multi agency chronologies: understanding how to use them and why
  - Contextual safeguarding: what it means and how to work with it

## **Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance Annual Report**

20. The Performance Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup scrutinises the effectiveness of safeguarding practice. This annual report summarises the common themes for learning and improvement to support vulnerable children. They are drawn from safeguarding self-assessments, school audits, single and multi-agency audits, participation work with children and young people, annual reports and serious case reviews practitioner feedback, performance data.
21. The data shows that the local context is one of continued increasing demand on services and higher rates of escalation into child protection and care. There is some indication that the early help work is beginning to increase and have impact. The number of children subject to a child protection plan remains high (605 at year end compared to 250 ten years ago). The main reason for a child protection plan is 'neglect'. The number of children looked after by the local authority rose by 13% over the year to 780 at the end of March 2019 but remains lower than national average. A large proportion of this increase is due to younger children coming in to the system with increasingly complex needs and elevated risk profiles particularly autism, mental health issues and risk of exploitation.
22. Partners identified the key financial and organisational pressures in relation to safeguarding children and adults (with care and support needs) as: recruitment & retention; increasing demand for services and the pressures placed on services through problems with housing and homelessness.
23. Practitioners have told the OSCB that the top three things they would change in the system are (1) Better joint working between partners e.g. communications, info sharing (2) Better training e.g. shorter, tailored to role, using case studies (3) More positive profile of safeguarding work
24. Through OSCB case reviews children have conveyed simple messages that at times they 'felt like they were missing' or simply 'not seen' by professionals. They also told us how small gestures of kindness and being noticed by professional made a big difference.
25. Key messages are summarised as:
- There is much to be proud of across the safeguarding partnership although the workload is high, and it is not straightforward
  - We need to continue to focus on working well together
  - We need to 'think family'
  - We need to be better at listening to children

## **Case Review and Governance Annual Report**

26. The purpose of the group is to support the OSCB in fulfilling its statutory duty to undertake reviews of cases both where the criteria<sup>1</sup> are met and where they

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<sup>1</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

are not met in order provide valuable information on joint working and areas for improvement. The group comprises members drawn from Thames Valley Police, the County Council's children's services and legal services, the OCCG Designated Doctor and Designated Nurse, OH NHS FT, Public Health and a Head teacher representative.

27. Over the last year the OSCB has worked on four serious case reviews. The OSCB also instigated four partnership learning reviews, which were ongoing at year end.
28. Safeguarding themes covered by case reviews have been cross cutting – neglect plays a part in almost all cases. Broadly speaking additional themes have included: the impact of parental mental health on parenting and the well-being of children; severe emotional and physical abuse; engagement and attendance in education as well as children's emotional wellbeing as they explore their identity and, in doing so, may also become at risk of harm to themselves. The CRAG considered 8 cases for a potential review this year. An emerging theme from these has been 'contextual safeguarding' e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse and child drug exploitation.
29. The ten most frequent learning points to strengthen working together in Oxfordshire have been:
  1. **Understand the 'lived experience' of the child in the family:** use multi-agency chronologies to share information in a cumulative view to weigh up risks over time and keep previous events in mind. Make sure that children's comments are clearly recorded and understood – actual words used and not just the interpretation of them.
  2. **Curiosity:** being curious about the family's past history, relationships and current circumstances in a way that moves beyond reliance on self-reported information
  3. **Response to physical abuse:** identifying it, listening to children and following safeguarding processes thoroughly; children may sometimes be too afraid to speak or unable to verbalise what they are going through
  4. **The role of schools in keeping children safe**
    - effective management of safeguarding records and sharing them when children transfer schools; effective escalation of concerns.
    - children are safest in full time education. Oxfordshire serious case reviews indicate that children on reduced time-tables, children absent from school and children educated at home are at increased risk. School attendance is a critical factor to support opportunity, well-being and safety
    - when the child is not in school being aware of the implications of elective home education and knowing which agencies are in touch with the family and to what effect
  5. **Parental wellbeing:** mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse are recurring themes. With respect to mental health colleagues need to

recognise the risks and impact on the safety of the child; don't minimise 'older' information

6. **Fragmented management of health needs:** ensuring effective communication across services for co-ordinated and consistent management of care
7. **Children's emotional wellbeing:** increasing evidence of self-harm by children aged 10 years & above, recognising that, as children explore their identity they may be at risk of harm to themselves
8. **Children's limited capacity to protect themselves** as they move into adolescence after experiencing a lack of consistent, supportive parenting in their early years (long lasting impact of neglect)
9. **Rethinking 'did not attend' to 'was not brought'**
10. **Understanding safeguarding risks that exist in the child's environment – not just their family** e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse, peer on peer abuse and child exploitation.

## **Financial and Staff Implications**

30. None noted

## **Equalities Implications**

31. None noted

Deputy Director for Safeguarding, Lara Patel

Background papers:

Contact Officer:  
Tan Lea  
August 2019



Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board



# Annual Report

2018 - 2019

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# 1. Foreword from the Chair

As the Independent Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, it is my honour to provide a foreword to this the 2018-2019 Annual Report. I hope that you enjoy reading it and find it an informative and stimulating read about the Achievements, Challenges and Activities of the Board in the past year. We have responded to feedback from last year about the length of the report and have tried to make it a shorter, more concise and pithy report. I would like pay tribute to the hard-working team in the LSCB office who have worked so hard to pull this document together and who support me so impressively in my role as Chair.

I started my tenure as Chair of the Board in September 2018. It was very apparent to me from the start that I was joining a strong partnership with much to celebrate and build upon. Oxfordshire, like other areas, has challenges around demand on statutory services, criminal exploitation of children, the availability of specialist provision for children with complex needs and so on. However I head up a partnership that I am convinced is well sighted on these and other issues and committed to working together to address them. I continue to see little sign of complacency regarding performance and the issues that face us; instead I see a range of professionals and managers committed to continuous improvement.

This is the last report that will be written under the previous version of Working Together to Safeguard Children. The Department of Education issued new guidance last year (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) setting out a change in the way that Safeguarding Boards are governed. Boards were required to submit to the Department proposals for how they would comply with the new guidance by the end of June 2019. I am pleased to report that Oxfordshire submitted their proposals at the start of May. Our proposals built on the strong existing partnership but created a new Executive Group that is headed up the so-called “Big Three” of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire’s Clinical Commissioning Group and Thames Valley Police who have lead responsibility for the local safeguarding arrangements.

We are committed to the Annual Report being an impactful, not just one that is read and then gathers dust on a shelf or sits on an internet page slowly becoming out of date! So if the report raises questions for you, you strongly agree or disagree with any of the contents or wish to know anything more about any aspect of the report do get in touch with us to discuss it further. In the meantime thank you all for what you do week in and week out to safeguard the children and young people of Oxfordshire and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year.

Richard Simpson  
Independent Chair

## 2. Introduction

This annual report is a retrospective look at the work of OSCB for 2018/19. It will be the last Annual Report under the auspices of Working Together 2015. In May 2019 the OSCB will move to a new set of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in line with Working Together 2018.

At present the OSCB Chair is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness; the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. Finally, it should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.





## 3. Structure and Governance

### 3.1 Remit

The OSCB is a partnership set up under the Children Act 2004 to co-operate with each other to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Guidance is set out in Working Together. The Board's job is to make sure services are delivered, in the right way, at the right time, so that children are safe and we make a positive difference to the lives of them and their family. This is done in two ways:

#### 1. Co-ordinating local work by:

- Developing robust policies and procedures.
- Participating in the planning of services for children in Oxfordshire.
- Communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and explaining how this can be done.

#### 2. Ensuring that local work is effective by:

- Monitoring what is done by partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Undertaking Serious Case Reviews and other multi-agency case reviews and sharing learning opportunities.
- Collecting and analysing information about child deaths.
- Publishing an annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

### 3.3 Structures and strategic links

The board is not responsible or accountable for delivering child protection services but it does need to know how well the safeguarding system is working. The board's membership is set out in Appendix A. It has effective linkages to other strategic groups in Oxfordshire to ensure clear remit and cross partnership working. The board's structure (going forward) is set out in Appendix B and linkages are set out in C. The OSCB has a strong working relationship with the Safeguarding Adults Board with joint meetings twice a year. This year the two Boards have had the joint priorities of: housing; domestic abuse and transitions.

### 3.4 The OSCB Chair

The OSCB Independent Chair, Richard Simpson, was recruited following a commissioning process in 2018. This involved a series of interviews with board members and children. Richard is a senior manager with Barnardo's children's charity. This arrangement delivers additional independent scrutiny for the Board. As well as his personal experience and skill set, he brings with him the knowledge and support of Barnardo's.

### 3.5 Financial contributions

All board members contribute to the OSCB. The contributions for 2018/19 are attached at Appendix D.

### 3.6 Subgroups

The Board was supported by an Executive Group comprising the Independent Chair, strategic leads and subgroup chairs. The purpose of the sub-groups and key activity in the past year is outlined below:

**Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance** – reviews safeguarding data and intelligence to test the effectiveness of services including early help. The group has undertaken three multi agency safeguarding audits, ten audits of agency safeguarding practice and escalated issues on safeguarding in education, domestic abuse and sufficiency of placements for children with complex needs. See section 5.

**Case Review and Governance** – undertakes rapid reviews of serious incident notifications, oversees and supervises all serious case reviews and identify themes, actions and learning from serious incidents. The group has led on four serious case reviews, three partnership reviews and developed guides, four learning summaries and a series of ten learning points for practitioners in Oxfordshire. See section 6.



**Training** – commissions, monitors and oversees the delivery of training, hosted an annual conference and provided learning summaries and events from key themes that identified locally and nationally on behalf of the OSCB and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. The group has supported learning events on child drug exploitation for 100 delegates, multi-agency chronologies for children for 100 delegates as well as an annual conference for 150 delegates around contextual safeguarding. 5017 delegates have undertaken face to face safeguarding training and 6497 delegates have undertaken e-learning. The group also set in place the mechanism for charging for non-attendance at courses in 2019/20 to respond to a concerning level of last-minute non-attendance.

**Child Exploitation** – ensures a co-ordinated multi-agency approach is in place for all child exploitation concerns and emerging issues. The group has supported the development of a Child Exploitation screening tool as well as partnership arrangements for exploited and missing children across the county. This is developing a common understanding of the patterns and trends around missing and child exploitation risks within each local area, enabling the partnership to ensure that resources are directed appropriately. Other work has been undertaken to improve services when working with boys as victims as well as to better safeguard children with disabilities from exploitation.

**Safeguarding in Education** – ensures staff in pre-schools, schools, colleges and other education providers are aware of key safeguarding issues and are also able to escalate their concerns to the Board and Executive Group and influence the strategic development of services. The group has focused on the themes of keeping children safe in education, elective home education, promoting CAMHS guidance on self-harm for schools; analysing Ofsted safeguarding reports and school audit work. It has produced a termly newsletter for schools.

**Procedures** – ensures all practitioners and managers across the children’s workforce have up-to-date guidance and procedures on all key safeguarding issues via the OSCB website. The group has updated procedures as a result of changes in legislation and guidance, in particular, Working Together 2018. Colleagues can refer to the online manual to see updates, which include working together on Information sharing, Female Genital Mutilation, Historical abuse.

**Child Death Overview Panel** – ensures local oversight of all child deaths in the area and ensures that lessons are learnt and action taken as appropriate to the circumstances and any themes are identified and addressed. The group has updated procedures as a result of changes in legislation and guidance, in Working Together 2018, in particular joining with Buckingham CDOP for themed meetings. Oxfordshire has a high number of deaths of children who are not Oxfordshire residents because it hosts the regional hospital and children’s hospice. CDOP monitors the numbers and trends of these deaths and liaises with their local area to ensure all appropriate learning is gained.

**Disabled Children** – ensures the safeguarding needs of disabled children are addressed and high quality services are delivered to this group. The group has worked to improve the revised Childcare and Development checklist by refining key criteria which need to be addressed for disabled children’s health and well-being, contributed to plans for the Oxfordshire approach to reviewing and learning from child deaths under the new Working Together guidance and considered the impact of the Intensive Support Team in safeguard those with challenging behaviour related to their mental health needs. The group has worked closely with the Exploitation group on the strategy aimed at reducing the vulnerability of children with additional needs to child sexual exploitation / child drug exploitation.

**Health Advisory Group** –brings together the lead health safeguarding practitioners and alerts the Board and Executive to key safeguarding gaps and concerns from the health sector. It also ensures that health professionals are aware of key safeguarding issues. The group has focused on the themes of drug exploitation, neglect and health professionals role in identifying it (including the concept of ‘Was Not Brought’ rather than ‘Did Not Attend’ appointments), gender identity, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), safeguarding issues and mental health (including concerns about lack of provision of in-patient beds), FGM and the Child Protection – Information System. The latter is a new project to link IT systems used in health and social services, to help staff share information securely on children who are looked after or on a child protection plan.



### 3.7 Listening to views of children and young people in Oxfordshire

The group, Voice of Oxfordshire Youth (VOXY), was part of the recruitment process for the OSCB independent chair in 2018/19. The group offers a helpful sounding board for the OSCB, which listens to its view and concerns. Last year VOXY told the OSCB that it was concerned about fabricated and induced illness. This led to a review of current cases by the OSCB designated doctor, with findings presented to the board as well as a review of inter-agency procedures confirming that they are fit for purpose. VOXY also said that they were concerned about the effectiveness of preventive work undertaken with young people they perceive to have started to demonstrate harmful behaviours. This led to a multi-agency audit and learning summary, which contributed to the OSCB's decision to run its annual conference on contextual safeguarding.

The OSCB was also keen to capture the views of children it comes in to contact with through serious case reviews. These are children who have been at risk of serious harm and neglect. Through meetings with reviewers they have told us that at times they 'felt like they were missing' or simply 'not seen' by professionals. They have also told us how small gestures of kindness made a big difference. This re-iterates the message from previous years that practitioners, across the system, should never underestimate the difference that they can make by 'being there', following-up and caring.



## 4. Priorities and Progress

### 4.1 Priorities for 2018/19

The OSCB had three aims: to provide leadership for effective safeguarding practice; to drive forward practice improvement and to challenge in order to ensure that children are kept safe. See Appendix E for the details.

### 4.2 Reporting on progress

#### Aim 1: Providing leadership for effective safeguarding practice.

Working Together 2018 set out the new statutory requirement for the leadership of safeguarding arrangements to be at chief executive level across health, police and the local authority. The OSCB has worked hard to ensure that the new arrangements will build on the existing collective approach to safeguarding children and young people and is set out in the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The OSCB has worked jointly with the adults safeguarding board on Joint priorities. Domestic Abuse training is now up and running, workshops on the young people's pathway are in place and consultation has just completed on the next 5-year strategy. A Housing network has been set up for local providers, a multi-agency housing audit is underway and there is good board representation. Transitions work ensures that there is good cross-over between services and any concerns are quickly escalated.

In addition, reporting on modern slavery is reviewed to maintain a clear view on trends and any concerns arising regarding children – none have been reported as yet.

The voluntary and community sector held elections for representatives on the OSCB board and representatives from that sector are well-represented across the subgroups. The OSCB Chair has met and engaged with the Children and Young people's Forum. An action plan is ensuring good communication as well as visibility on the new OSCB website.

#### Aim 2: Driving forward practice improvement.

##### Safeguarding adolescents

The OSCB has supported the development of a Child Exploitation screening tool as well as partnership arrangements for exploited and missing children across the county. This is timely: whilst the number of children going missing has reduced those that went missing 3 or more times rose by 22% last year (from 149 to 168). The OSCB has challenged around the work with young people at risk of peer abuse. Audits have checked the effectiveness of joint working. Workshops have been run to raise awareness. Learning from the Child J serious case review with respect to mental health support for adolescents has been implemented by mental health services. The OSCB has worked with the Adults Board to improve communication and joint working on those children transitioning from children to adult services.

## Tackling neglect

The OSCB has supported the development of the neglect practitioner portal which includes assessment tools to work with families, videos for practitioners, research and guidance on understanding and working with neglect. Partners have implemented a multi-agency training course on neglect and working with parents around emotional abuse. Colleagues have embedded the early help pathway - there were 1,378 in 2018/19 recorded early help assessments compared to 458 in 2016/17. Partners have checked how well we are involving fathers: data indicates that this could be better. Since July 2018 only 44% of fathers attended child protection conferences regarding their children.

## Taking action from learning



They were ‘Supporting LGBT children, young people and families’ as well as ‘Working with fathers and other male carers’ course. This has increased the range of training and reinforced the ‘Think Family’ message that the OSCB promotes.



The OSCB has run three learning events on: (1) child drug exploitation as this theme has been raised by practitioners across the county e.g. Kingfisher Team, area safeguarding groups; (2) multi-agency chronologies as this is a repeated theme from serious case reviews and can help address neglect and (3) contextual safeguarding<sup>1</sup> as this has been of concern to practitioners across the county.

<sup>1</sup>Threats to the welfare of children can come from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school ... from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

## 5. Safeguarding Performance and Effectiveness

### 5.1 Quality assurance framework

The performance, audit and quality assurance subgroup reviews performance and effectiveness across the system. It draws on performance data, the annual impact assessment, safeguarding self-assessments, single and multi-agency audits, participation work with children and young people, serious case reviews and practitioner feedback.

### 5.2 Local safeguarding profile: performance data

Quantitative data provides a picture on ongoing rising demand. There is some indication that the early help work is beginning to increase and have impact. Early help assessments have increased significantly. In 2016/17 early help assessments made up 6% of all assessments compared to 18% last year. The number of troubled families worked with rose from 2698 last year to 4631.

The 2018 Ofsted inspection was positive about improvements made to the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and these have subsequently been seen to show impacts. In 2017/18 45% of MASH enquiries were dealt with within the target timescale. In 2018/19 this improved to 98% of 'red' enquiries were completed on time and 75% of other enquiries.

After over 10 years of growth in child protection numbers (250 children in March 2009) the number reduced in the last year. The number of children on a child protection plan fell from 729 last year to 605 at the end of March 2018. Neglect is the most common reason for children to be subject to child protection plans (70%). This compares to the national average of 48%<sup>2</sup>. Neglect is not however the most common reason for children to be subject to an early help assessment.

The number of children looked after by the local authority rose by 13% from 690 last year to 780 at the end of March 2019 but remains lower than national average. This is an increasing trend. The biggest increase has been in younger children, who are presenting with increasingly complex needs and elevated risk profiles particularly autism, mental health issues and risk of exploitation.

Audit findings (children displaying harmful behaviours) and case reviews (Children A-F) show the impact of adverse childhood experiences. Quantitative data indicates that the number of child victims of crime rose by 30% (from 2313 to 3021) and the numbers of domestic crime involving children rose 55% (from 1840 to 2854).

From national and local serious case reviews (Children A-F and Child J) the OSCB has evidence of links between safeguarding risk and safeguarding in education issues: attendance, exclusions, elective home education, attainment and achievement of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

<sup>2</sup>(SFR 2017/18).





Current year end statistics from 2018/19 indicate: 715 children were recorded as receiving elective home education and 413 pupils who were on a reduced timetable. Current statistics from the end of the second school term (i.e. Easter 2019) indicate 1448 pupils had received a fixed term exclusion and 55 pupils who were permanently excluded, of whom 19 received SEND support.

Data is showing us that children with additional needs make up a large proportion of the children worked with by the Kingfisher team, which specialises in supporting those children most at risk of child sexual exploitation. We know that this type of vulnerability often overlaps with drug exploitation and 50% of the caseload are known to have issues with drug and alcohol abuse. 40% were assessed as having mental health issues. Data also shows that the proportion of Oxfordshire's disadvantaged pupils aged 10-11 achieving the expected standard was below the England average at Key Stage 2 in 2018.

Local mental health services continue to face high levels of demand: in 2017/18 there were 566 child referrals into CAMHS each month, in 2018/19 this rose to 697. This has had an impact on the percentage of referrals to CAMHS who are seen within 12. At the end of the year this was only 34% compared with a target of 75%. The OSCB receives regular updates on this work and is assured that the urgent cases are seen promptly.

There are a higher than average numbers of young people remaining in their placement after 16 (84%) and a high percentage of 19-21-year olds in suitable accommodation (92%). The county council maintains contact with 93% 19-21 year old care leavers. 68% of the cohort are currently in employment, education or training.

### 5.3 Quality assurance: measuring performance and effectiveness

The OSCB takes a system-wide view on safeguarding work through an annual impact assessment and multi-agency auditing. These showed that the key financial and organisational pressures in relation to safeguarding children and their families were (1) recruitment and retention of staff and (2) increasing demand for services. They also pointed to (3) the need for partner agencies to fully understand their safeguarding duties within Working Together 2018, in particular key partner agencies, so that they can have sustained positive impact as well as (4) the benefits of sharing information and working well together as a long-term goal.

The OSCB gains further insight in to how well things are working at practitioner level through agencies' self-assessments and self-audits. Ten safeguarding audits from seven different agencies were reviewed. Collectively they showed that agencies are focussed on getting core safeguarding business right but that there is a determination to do better.

- Evidence of good practice. Thames Valley Police reported an increase in uptake of 'Operation Encompass' from .. to .... This system alerts schools if the child has been in the home when a domestic abuse incident has taken place in the family home the evening/ night before school.
- Evidence of quality assurance work. Children's Social Care audit stated, "*evidence found of multi-agency involvement including housing, education, LCSS, health. There is a strong sense of multi-agency collaboration on the case*".
- Evidence of improved practice to deliver better outcomes. The Community Rehabilitation Company is setting up a permanent Risk and Safeguarding Practice Group to meet bi-monthly, to include practitioners, Unpaid Work staff and programme staff.

Whilst quality assurance work highlighted much good practice there were consistent themes for development at a practitioner level of the need for: good sharing of information, multi-agency chronologies and co-ordinated work.

### 5.5 Escalated issues

Quality assurance work raised some key concerns for the partnership over the last year which were escalated to the board. The first concerned domestic abuse: use of the 'young people's pathway'; use of MARAC; police recording of children's voice at domestic abuse incidents; sign up to Operation Encompass. The second was about safeguarding in education: setting and reporting of performance measures to be sure that children are being kept safe in and out of school. The third was about working together and case conferences: reliable reporting on attendance and contributing. Finally, the sufficiency of placements for children with complex mental health needs meaning there is a delay in discharging them when they come in to hospital.

## 6. Serious Case Reviews, Partnership Reviews, etc

### 6.1 National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

In 2018 a revised version of Working Together was released along with Transitional Guidance, which applies until the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements come in to place. The National Panel's<sup>3</sup> role and remit was outlined in this guidance along with expectations on safeguarding children boards.

The responsibility for overseeing this work lies with the Case Review and Governance (CRAG) Subgroup of OSCB. This includes the requirement to undertake a 'Rapid Review' as soon as a serious incident is reported to Ofsted and becomes known to the OSCB. The aim of the review is to enable the OSCB to gather the facts about the case and decide what steps we should take next, including whether to recommend to the independent chair to commission a review.

### 6.2 Cases considered for a review

The CRAG undertook three Rapid Reviews. In only one case were the criteria considered to have been met for a serious case review and the recommendation was also made by CRAG that the case raised issues which were complex and of national importance. Whilst the National Panel did not agree that the criteria had been met for a serious case review it has since commissioned its first National Review on adolescent risk and this same case will be examined in detail for that purpose.

The CRAG also undertook reviews of a further five cases, that were not notified to Ofsted as serious incidents but were of enough concern to local agencies that they were reviewed by the CRAG. Three of the cases resulted in Partnership Learning Reviews.

### 6.3 Ongoing reviews

The OSCB has worked on four serious case reviews, which were initiated before the start of the financial year. Of those four reviews: two have been signed off by the Board one is due for sign off and one has been completed as far as possible, whilst parallel processes are underway. The OSCB has worked on three partnership reviews all of which are ongoing and near completion

These reviews involve nine children, the majority of which are aged between 10-15 years, five are male and four are female. Two of these children are transgender.

<sup>3</sup>National Safeguarding Children Practice Review Panel

## 6.4 Safeguarding themes from reviews

Safeguarding themes covered by case reviews have been cross cutting – neglect plays a part in almost all cases. Broadly speaking additional themes have included: the impact of parental mental health on parenting and the well-being of children; severe emotional and physical abuse; engagement and attendance in education as well as children’s emotional wellbeing as they explore their identity and, in doing so, may also become at risk of harm to themselves.

As mentioned, the CRAG considered 8 cases for a potential review this year. An emerging theme from these has been ‘contextual safeguarding’ e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse and child drug exploitation.

## 6.5 Learning from reviews

The learning from OSCB reviews is shared on the website. Each review has a series of recommendations and action plans.

One message that is mirrored in the impact assessments, the audits and our local reviews is to remember the value of good sharing of information, using multi-agency chronologies and co-ordinating work. See the Golden Rules of information sharing and the information on chronologies on the website.

## Ten Learning points to strengthen working together in Oxfordshire

The OSCB has summarised the ten most frequent learning points from recent case reviews to share with practitioners. They should serve as a reminder of ‘points to bear in mind’ in the busy schedules of day-to-day work. There are many small changes that can be made to improve processes in a system. Ultimately the repeated messages are about how we, within the system, work.

- 1. Understand the ‘lived experience’ of the child in the family:** use multi-agency chronologies to share information in a cumulative view to weigh up risks over time and keep previous events in mind. Make sure that children’s comments are clearly recorded and understood – actual words used and not just the interpretation of them.
- 2. Be curious:** be curious about the family’s past history, relationships and current circumstances in a way that moves beyond reliance on self-reported information
- 3. Respond to physical abuse:** identify it, listen to children and follow safeguarding processes thoroughly; children may sometimes be too afraid to speak or unable to verbalise what they are going through



#### 4. Consider the role of schools in keeping children safe:

- children are safest in full time education. Oxfordshire serious case reviews indicate that children on reduced time-tables, children absent from school and children educated at home are at increased risk. School attendance is a critical factor to support opportunity, well-being and safety
- manage safeguarding records carefully and share them when children transfer schools
- escalate concerns to safeguarding leads and follow up when your concerns persist
- when the child is not in school be aware of the implications of elective home education; know which agencies are in touch with the family and to what effect

5. **Recognise the risks and impact of Parental wellbeing on the safety of the child:** mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse are recurring themes. Don't minimise 'older' information and use it to inform your chronology

6. **Ensure effective communication across health services for co-ordinated and consistent management of care:** fragmented management of health needs can increase safeguarding risks

7. **Be mindful of children's emotional wellbeing:** there is increasing evidence of self-harm by children aged 10 years & above.

8. **Consider that children have a limited capacity to protect themselves as they move into adolescence:** more so for children who experience a lack of consistent, supportive parenting in their early years this can. Recognise that, as children explore their identity, they may be at risk of harm to themselves.

9. **Rethink 'did not attend'** to 'was not brought' and follow up to understand why the child was not brought

10. **Understand safeguarding risks that exist in the child's environment** – not just their family e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse, peer on peer abuse and child exploitation.



## 7. Strengths and Challenges

This report provides a rigorous assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of strength and challenge as follows:

### 7.1 Strengths

The OSCB is a high functioning, high challenge Board with a strong reputation and a long-standing commitment to partnership working. The work to move smoothly to new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is evidence of that. The OSCB training and learning programme continues to be an example of excellent practice with local practitioners volunteering their time to deliver learning to thousands of colleagues across Oxfordshire each year. The continued drive to address neglect through training, better resources and processes is positive and should continue. The indication that more early help assessments are taking place and that for the first time in ten years the number of children on child protection plans has not risen is a good indication of change.

### 7.2 Challenges

There is huge demand on the statutory system. The child population of Oxfordshire has grown by 7% in the last ten years and is estimated to stand at 143,400 young people aged under-18<sup>4</sup>. Alongside this growth there has been increased demand for services particularly towards the high end of the continuum of need. Our impact assessment tells us that local agencies are struggling from the financial pressures on resources and the capacity to retain staff to manage it.

Challenges exist in terms of practice improvement, leadership and joint working.

The key challenges for the Board partners in 2019/20 in terms of practice improvement are:

- **Neglect**

This is an ongoing concern in Oxfordshire and a repeat factor in case reviews. OSCB partners remain committed to addressing it. Neglect is recorded as the main reason in 70% for child protection plans although it is not being picked up in a similar extent in early help assessments. Multi-agency participation and contribution to case conferences could be improved and the standard use of the multi-agency chronology still needs embedded. Data also indicates that fathers are present and contributing to only 44% of case conferences.

<sup>4</sup>Source ONS Mid Year Estimates for Oxfordshire for people aged 0-17 2007 & 2017



- **Safeguarding in (and out of) Education:**

This issue frequently presents in case reviews and audit work. We know that children are safer in education. Work has just begun to agree targets and report data on part-time time tables, attendance, exclusions and also elective home education. We know that we need to improve understanding of education entitlement and provision to different partners in the system. OSCB partners are in the early stages of delivering change and improving practice.

- **Contextual safeguarding and child exploitation**

This is an ongoing concern and the partnership arrangements need to be embedded. The partnership response needs to be agreed and implemented.

Adolescents and risk: more adolescent children are subject to reviews, mental health concerns shown in increased referrals, peer on peer abuse not fully addressed through the young people's pathway

The key challenges for the Board in 2019/20 in terms of leadership and governance are:

- **Embedding the new arrangements and raising awareness of the board to local practitioners**
- **Independent scrutiny:** in the new safeguarding arrangements this will be a new piece of work to embed – need to ensure it picks up on escalated issues from 2018/19 such as domestic abuse
- **Voice of young people:** all audits and reviews point to good practice and the need to really improve this to know 'what it is like to be the child in this family'

The key challenges for the Board in 2019/20 in terms of joint work with the Safeguarding Adults Board are:

- **Domestic abuse:** to improve training for the workforce, better provision for people affected by domestic abuse and better joint working to support young people in abusive relationships
- **Housing:** to improve communication and joint working
- **Transitions:** to improve communication and joint working on those children transitioning from children to adult services
- The boards will also keep a watching brief on **Modern slavery** and **safeguarding training**





## 8. In conclusion

As we publish this annual report we are delighted to be launching our new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements on behalf of the children, young people and families in Oxfordshire.

The new statutory requirement is for the leadership of safeguarding arrangements to be at chief executive level across health, police and the local authority. We are fully committed to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare under these new arrangements. We are already setting out our priorities for the coming year.





## Appendix A. OSCB membership

Independent Chair, Barnardo's

Oxfordshire County Council: children's services, youth justice services, adult services, fire and rescue services, legal & public health

Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

NHS England Area Team

West Oxfordshire District Council

Cherwell District Council

Oxford City Council

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council

Thames Valley Police

Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service

Community Rehabilitation Company

National Probation Service

Lay Members

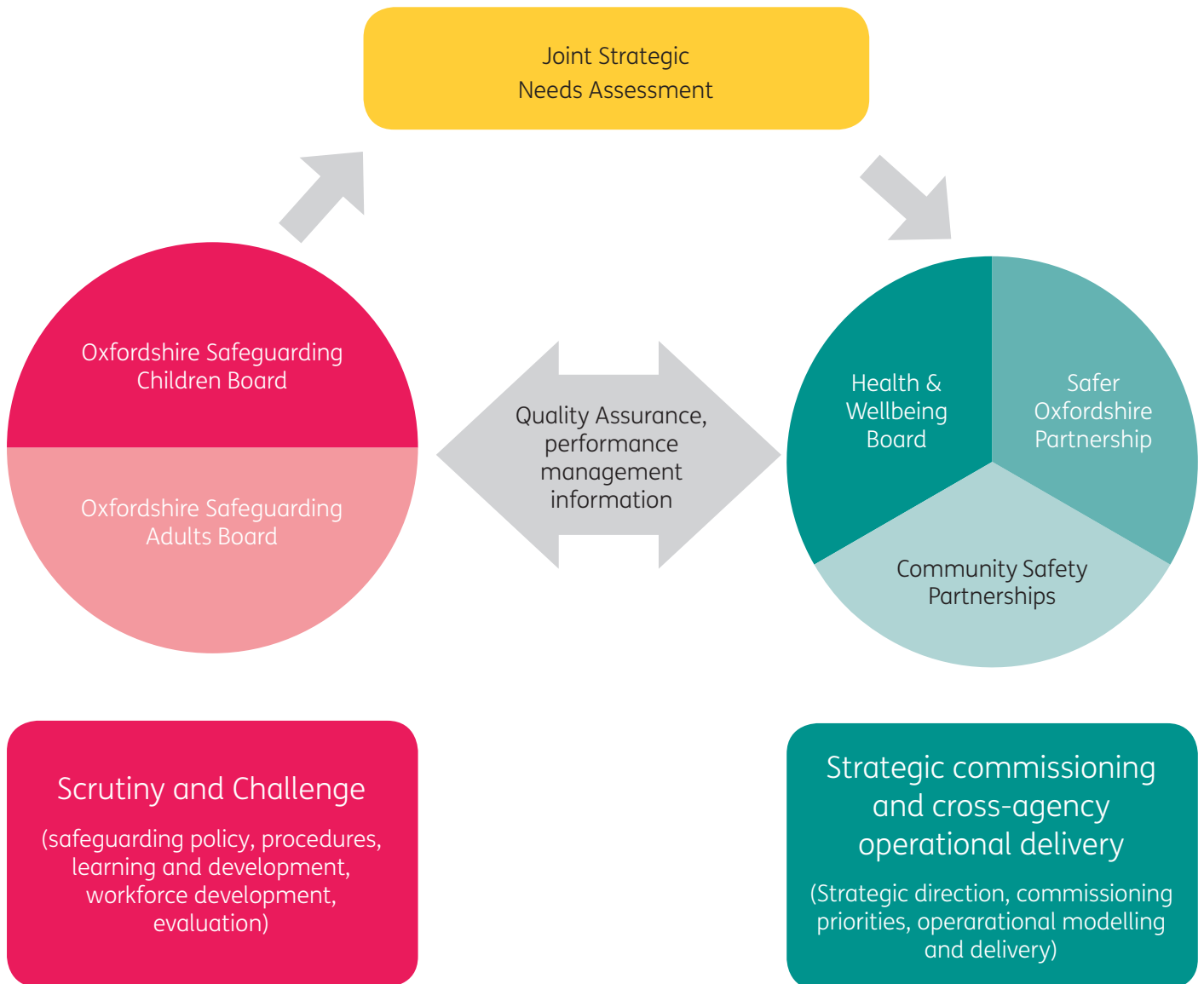
Representation from schools and colleges

Representation from the voluntary sector

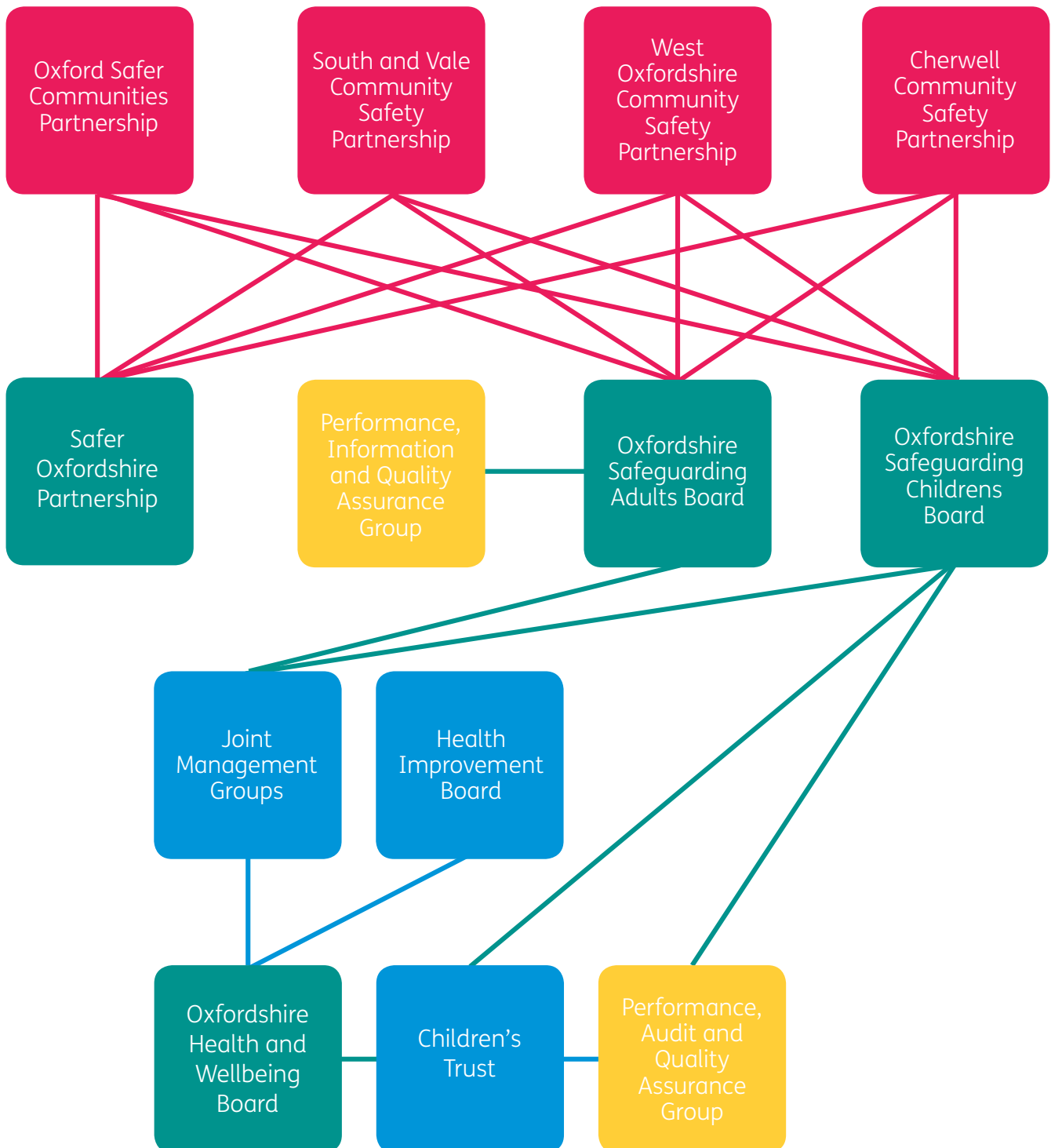
Representation from the housing sector

Representation from the military

# Appendix B: OSCB structure diagram



# Appendix C: Linkages to other strategic groups



## Appendix D: Funding and expenditure in 2018/19

	Provisional budget 2018/19	End of year budget 2018/19
<b>Funding streams</b>		
Public Health	-£30,000.00	-£30,000.00
<b>Income</b>		
Foster carer training		-£3,825.00
Neglect training		-£2,200.00
<b>Contributions</b>		
OCC Children, Education & Families	-£196,610.00	-£199,000.00
OCC Dedicated schools grant	-£64,000.00	-£64,000.00
Oxfordshire OCCG	-£60,000.00	-£60,000.00
Thames Valley Police	-£21,000.00	-£21,000.00
National Probation Service	-£1,410.00	-£1,410.00
CRC	-£2,500.00	-£2,500.00
Oxford City Council	-£10,000.00	-£10,000.00
Cherwell DC	-£5,000.00	-£5,000.00
South Oxfordshire DC	-£5,000.00	-£5,000.00
West Oxfordshire DC	-£5,000.00	-£5,000.00
Vale of White Horse DC	-£5,000.00	-£5,000.00
Cafcass	-£500.00	-£500.00
Public Health (see above)	£0	£0
<b>Total income</b>	<b>-£406,020.00</b>	<b>-£414,435.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Independent Chair	£39,000.00	£33,504.00
Business unit	£253,000.00	£253,908.00
Comms	£14,500.00	£14,970.00
Training & learning	£60,000.00	£60,094.00
Subgroups	£10,000.00	£10,129.00
All case reviews	£40,000.00	£37,868.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£416,500.00</b>	<b>£410,473.00</b>

## Appendix E: Board priorities in 2018/19

<b>AIM: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE</b>	
<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>Improve board effectiveness</b>	Develop the work of the Board to be more effective in light of the new Working Together guidance
<b>Joint work with OSAB</b>	Develop joint working on housing, domestic abuse, transitions and keep a watching brief on modern slavery
<b>Engage local communities</b>	Ensure that local voluntary and community organisations are better engaged in the partnership: training, communication and working together
<b>AIM: DRIVE FORWARD PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT</b>	
<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>Safeguard adolescents</b>	Support multi-agency responses to safeguard vulnerable adolescents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transitioning from children to adult services with OSAB</li> <li>• at risk of domestic abuse or peer abuse with OSAB</li> <li>• at risk of criminal exploitation</li> <li>• not in full time education</li> </ul>
<b>Address neglect</b>	Support a co-ordinated and multi-agency response to neglect
<b>Act following learning</b>	Ensure the training workstream is well co-ordinated across the OSCB and OSAB and having an impact  Ensure the learning and improvement comms. workstream reinforces safeguarding messages
<b>AIM: ENSURE THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE KEPT SAFE</b>	
<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>Challenge improvements</b>	Test how well learning is embedded in to practice through multi-agency audits which include the voices of children and families  Check how well the integrated safeguarding arrangements effectively provide early help to families
<b>Assess risk and capacity</b>	Check the level of risk and impact on the safeguarding system through the annual partner self-assessments with OSAB

## Appendix F: Glossary

ACE	Adverse childhood experiences
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CRAC	Case Review & Governance
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
FGM	Female genital mutilation
LCSS	Locality and Community Support Service
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
LIQA	Learning, Improvement and Quality Assurance (framework)
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OCCG	Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
OFTSED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OSAB	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
OSCB	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
SFR	Statistical First Release
SOP	Safer Oxfordshire Partnership
TVP	Thames Valley Police
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VOXY	Voice of Oxfordshire's Youth





Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

[oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

[www.oscb.org.uk](http://www.oscb.org.uk)

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<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Case Review and Governance sub group annual report, 2018/19</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>11 06 19</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Lara Patel</b>
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<b><u><a href="mailto:Lara.Patel@oxfordshire.gov.uk">Lara.Patel@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a></u></b>

### **Introduction:**

This is an annual report from the Chair of the Case Review and Governance (CRAG) subgroup – a subgroup of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. It covers information on cases considered, cases reviewed and action taken over the last 12 months.

### **1. Local context**

The subgroup comprises members drawn from Thames Valley Police, the County Council's children's services and legal services, the OCCG Designated Doctor and Designated Nurse, OH NHS FT, Public Health and a Head teacher representative. The purpose of the group is to support the OSCB in fulfilling its statutory duty to undertake reviews of cases both where the criteria<sup>1</sup> is met and where it is not met in order provide valuable information on joint working and areas for improvement.

The OSCB has worked on four serious case reviews since the last report to the Board. Of those four reviews: two have been signed off by the Board one is due for sign off by the end of July and one has been completed as far as possible, whilst parallel processes are underway – which have been ongoing since 2013. The OSCB also instigated four partnership learning reviews, which were ongoing at year end. One of these reviews has been stepped down as a local partnership review as it will form part of the first national child safeguarding practice review overseen by the National Panel.

### **2. National Context**

Over the reporting period the OSCB has complied with the [DfE Transitional Guidance 2018](#), introduced in July 2018, and worked with the new arrangements in terms of undertaking Rapid Reviews of all serious incidents. See appendix A for the specific guidance that the CRAG has worked to with respect to notification of serious harm

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<sup>1</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

ans. The OSCB Chair has established dialogue with the National Panel on all Rapid Reviews led by the CRAG. With the implementation of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in 2019 the CRAG will seek to complete and close down all serious case reviews by the end of the calendar year.

### **3. Cases considered for review by the subgroup**

Eight cases were brought to the attention of the CRAG for consideration as a serious case review. Four of them led to further action.

#### **Rapid Reviews**

Three cases were notified to Ofsted as serious incidents and became the subject of a Rapid Review. All were referred in by Children's Social Care. These cases were reviewed from the perspective of whether they met the criteria for a SCR and whether the case raised issues which were complex or of national importance.

In only one case were the criteria considered to have been met for a serious case review (see Appendix B for criteria) and the recommendation was made by CRAG that the case raised issues which were complex and of national importance. All Rapid Reviews must be referred on to the National Panel for their consideration of case and the local decision. It was the National Panel's view that the criteria for an SCR had not been met. The National Panel has however commissioned its first National Review on adolescent risk and this same case will be examined in detail for that purpose. The CRAG is therefore not pursuing its own local review. No other decisions were contested by the panel.

#### **Cases considered for a review**

Five further cases were considered. They were not notified to Ofsted as serious incidents but were of enough concern to local agencies that they were reviewed by the CRAG. Most of these cases were referred in by Children's Social Care. One case was referred in jointly with health colleagues. Three of the cases resulted in Partnership Learning Reviews.

In all cases CRAG considered if the child was in immediate harm, if any further action needed to be taken, including assurances of good safeguarding practice, and if there were any immediate learning points.

### **4. Reviews: subject details and safeguarding themes**

There were seven ongoing reviews, which involve nine children. At the time that the reviews were commissioned two of the children were aged between 1-5 years and seven of the children were aged between 10-15 years. Four were female and five were male. Two of these children were transgender. Sadly, in two of the cases the children are deceased.

Safeguarding themes covered by case reviews have been cross cutting – neglect plays a part in almost all cases. Broadly speaking additional themes have included: the impact of parental mental health on parenting and the well-being of children; severe emotional and physical abuse; engagement and attendance in education as well as children’s emotional wellbeing as they explore their identity and, in doing so, may also become at risk of harm to themselves.

As mentioned, the CRAG considered 8 cases for a potential review this year. An emerging theme from these has been ‘contextual safeguarding’ e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse and child drug exploitation.

## 5. Views of children

Where possible reviewers have met with family and young people. In all cases the review teams have been grateful to family members that contributed to the review as they have provided an important insight into what happened from their perspective.

All cases are unique and generalisations should be avoided with small numbers but some of the points made were about ‘being missed’ by professionals (children), or ‘not being heard’ (other family members who wanted to help). Some reviews have identified how the ‘voice of the child’ was not known consistently, and therefore their lived experience could not be evaluated effectively. For example, reviews have stated:

- *X was “missed in my family” and recalls that professionals who came to their home “only chatted to mum” and “did not spend any time getting to know me”.*

There is also a message about when children do disclose information. In some cases when children disclosed information they felt that the outcome ‘made it worse’ for them (children).

- *“Y feels very let down that nothing happened” after disclosing a concern at school – the outcome is that this disclosure was shared with carers. Y ‘worries that this is still happening today’.*

The point was also made that when a child did feel that they were noticed, heard or listened to sympathetically, no matter how small the gesture, this did make a difference to their wellbeing and was remembered.

- *Z “Remembers two teachers (in particular) that were kind” and wants them to know that this made a difference at the time.*

Due to the number of children directly affected by current serious case reviews the CRAG is introducing a ‘life letter’ for children. The letter is written by the reviewer

explaining why the review was undertaken and what it found. It will be given to the children or will be kept on the children's case file until they are ready to read it.

## **6. Learning points from Oxfordshire case reviews**

Last year the CRAG summarised the ten most frequently recurring learning points from the three most recently published case reviews. These themes continue to run through the cases that CRAG reviews and have been updated to reflect greater emphasis on some of the points. See appendix C.

Case reviews frequently highlight good practice, where professionals not only do what is expected of them, and excellent practice, where they have gone above and beyond. Current cases highlight Oxfordshire professionals who have done just this: teachers, GPs, health visitors and social workers.

## **7. Report recommendations, monitoring and outcomes from case reviews**

All SCR recommendations form part of the OSCB business plan and drive the direction of work e.g. the OSCB 2018/19 priority to improve practice focuses on: working to address neglect and working to safeguard adolescents. Whilst the current SCRs have not been published there are action plans in place for all four of them, which were monitored through the OSCB Executive group in 2018/19. The four case reviews have over 20 recommendations.

Below are some examples of positive impact resulting from learning from serious case reviews:

- the development of a new 'single point of access'<sup>2</sup> by Oxfordshire CAMHS allowing for much more consultation, advice and support. There has been a 30% increase in activity (consultation, advice and signposting) as a result.
- the production of some short films by CAMHS on some of the most common mental health topics in medias that young people relate to e.g. on YouTube (see Appendix D for the links)
- new CAMHS website with information on service provision, self-help and online referrals [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/oxon](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/oxon).
- good 'access targets' for Oxfordshire CAMHS. It is now in the top three performing Trusts nationally.
- Information sharing through a multi-agency chronology is now compulsory at initial child protection conferences and reviews. Guidance has been issued and training provided.
- The Parenting Assessment<sup>3</sup> Manual is more widely used (revised guidance has been issued) and 16 practitioners have been trained to carry out the assessments.

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<sup>2</sup> CAMHS 'SPA' is open 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and will take self-referrals, family/carer and professional referrals

<sup>3</sup> Detailed safeguarding risk assessment of parental ability to care for children properly and, if necessary, the support required to do this

- Private fostering guidance has been updated and reissued and raised at children's social care team meetings. New posters explaining what private fostering is have been promoted.
- The guidance on safeguarding record keeping for schools has been updated and training is available. This is also checked during audits of schools and reported on annually.

## **8. Publication**

It is normal practice to publish serious case reviews for a minimum of one year on the OSCB website. However due to the age, identity and vulnerability of surviving children the OSCB will be making the case not to publish a number of these cases. The CRAG does not consider that it would be in their best interest to have their reviews made public.

## **8.Communicating the learning from reviews**

In 2018/19 the OSCB held two learning events and an annual conference on the following topics:

- Child drug exploitation: information was provided on what this is, how it is presenting in Oxfordshire and what work is being undertaken by local agencies
- Multi-agency chronologies: guidance was given on when, why and how to contribute to a multi-agency chronology along with a 7-minute guide on the process.
- Contextual safeguarding<sup>4</sup>: national and local information was given on this theme as well presentations on the victim's perspective

Learning documents have been produced on Elective Home Education; Lessons from reviews for Health partners; 7-minute guide of Parenting Assessment Manual<sup>5</sup> assessment and a 7-minute guide on Multi-agency chronologies. They are on the OSCB website.

## **9.Costs and timeframes**

Of the three most recently published reviews the costs have ranged from approximately £10,000 to over £20,000. All recently published reviews were signed off by the OSCB within a 12-18 month timeframe. The variation in costs is down to the type of review, its complexity, duration and the level of practitioner and family involvement.

## **10.In conclusion**

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<sup>4</sup> Threats to the welfare of children can come from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school ... from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

The OSCB is recommended to maintain a focus on the ten most common learning points from ongoing reviews and to ensure that members of the local safeguarding partnership are fully aware of the learning from the three most recently published summaries.



## **Appendix A: Serious harm and notifications**

16C (1) of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) states:

Where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if:

- (a) The child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or
- (b) While normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.

The notification must be within 5 days of becoming aware of the incident. The local authority should also report this to OSCB.

The local authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is suspected.

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It should also cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment should be exercised in cases where impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately certain.

Any notification of an incident referred to the Panel will also be referred to the Case Review and Governance Sub Group for a local decision on whether the case:

- meets the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- whether the case may raise issues which are complex or of national importance

## Appendix B: Working Together (DfE 2015) guidance

The Working Together (DfE 2015) guidance requires a Serious Case Review to be undertaken for every case where abuse or neglect is known or suspected<sup>6</sup> and either:

- a child dies; or
- a child is seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the local authority, LSCB partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

This includes cases where a child died by suspected suicide. Where a case is being considered where the child was seriously harmed unless there is *definitive evidence that there are no concerns about interagency working*, the LSCB must commission an SCR.

Seriously harmed includes, but is not limited to, cases where the child has sustained, as a result of abuse or neglect, any or all of the following:

- a. a potentially life-threatening injury;
- b. a serious and/or likely long-term impairment of physical or mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

This definition is not exhaustive. In addition, even if a child recovers, this does not mean that serious harm cannot have occurred.

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<sup>6</sup> The threshold for 'suspect' should be consistent with s47 Children Act 1989 "reasonable cause to suspect". The following question should be asked: given what we now know should this incident have led to a child protection investigation? If "yes" and the child has been seriously harmed then a Serious Case Review should take place.

## Appendix C: Learning points to strengthen working together in Oxfordshire

1. **Understand the 'lived experience' of the child in the family:** use multi-agency chronologies to share information in a cumulative view to weigh up risks over time and keep previous events in mind. Make sure that children's comments are clearly recorded and understood – actual words used and not just the interpretation of them.
2. **Curiosity:** being curious about the family's past history, relationships and current circumstances in a way that moves beyond reliance on self-reported information
3. **Response to physical abuse:** identifying it, listening to children and following safeguarding processes thoroughly; children may sometimes be too afraid to speak or unable to verbalise what they are going through
4. **The role of schools in keeping children safe**
  - effective management of safeguarding records and sharing them when children transfer schools; effective escalation of concerns.
  - children are safest in full time education. Oxfordshire serious case reviews indicate that children on reduced time-tables, children absent from school and children educated at home are at increased risk. School attendance is a critical factor to support opportunity, well-being and safety
  - when the child is not in school being aware of the implications of elective home education and knowing which agencies are in touch with the family and to what effect
5. **Parental wellbeing:** mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse are recurring themes. With respect to mental health colleagues need to recognise the risks and impact on the safety of the child; don't minimise 'older' information
6. **Fragmented management of health needs:** ensuring effective communication across services for co-ordinated and consistent management of care
7. **Children's emotional wellbeing:** increasing evidence of self-harm by children aged 10 years & above, recognising that, as children explore their identity they may be at risk of harm to themselves
8. **Children's limited capacity to protect themselves** as they move into adolescence after experiencing a lack of consistent, supportive parenting in their early years (long lasting impact of neglect)
9. **Rethinking 'did not attend' to 'was not brought'**
10. **Understanding safeguarding risks that exist in the child's environment – not just their family** e.g. children being vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families such as online abuse, peer on peer abuse and child exploitation.

## **Appendix D: Oxfordshire CAMHS short films on some of the most common mental health topics:**

Anxiety - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNvKs\\_I-3kk&list=PLKw7kjGJdcXAYVCP4IhoLzVOeBol1vqfU&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNvKs_I-3kk&list=PLKw7kjGJdcXAYVCP4IhoLzVOeBol1vqfU&index=1)

Psychosis-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL5erfC4yE8&list=PLKw7kjGJdcXAYVCP4IhoLzVOeBol1vqfU&index=2>

Personality Disorders-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oe11chDqbBo&index=3&list=PLKw7kjGJdcXAYVCP4IhoLzVOeBol1vqfU>

Neurodiversity-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9ZOqSw9ZLc&list=PLKw7kjGJdcXAYVCP4IhoLzVOeBol1vqfU&index=4>

## **Glossary:**

CRAG	Case Review and Governance Group
IMR	Individual Management Review
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OCCG	Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
PAQA	Performance Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup
SCR	Serious Case Review

## Annual report of the Performance, audit and quality assurance subgroup 2018/19

### Introduction

PAQA takes a system-wide view on safeguarding work through multi-agency audits and an annual impact assessment. Agencies self-assessments and self-audits then enable PAQA to drill down to how well things are working at practitioner level within individual services. Views are drawn from both practitioners as well as families and children.

### Quality assurance audits on working together

Three multi-agency audits covered the issues of 'strategy meetings'<sup>1</sup>, young people who engage in harmful behaviour and safeguarding when interpreting. Findings were specific to each area of work but there are cross-cutting quality assurance themes reflected across the system: the need for partner agencies to fully understand their safeguarding duties within Working Together 2018, in particular the key partner agencies, so that they can have sustained long term impact and the benefits of sharing information through multi-agency chronologies which can shine a light on what it really means to be a child in that family.

### Safeguarding work within OSCB agencies

PAQA reviewed safeguarding audits from ten services within seven agencies. Collectively the audits showed that agencies are focussed on getting core safeguarding business right. Many noted the need to 'think family' as well as the need to improve how children's views were captured to inform decisions: they were captured in many cases but most

<sup>1</sup> A Strategy Meeting is normally held following an Initial Assessment which indicates that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer Significant Harm.

agencies stated that they wanted to be able to better evidence it in all cases. Whilst highlighting much good practice the themes of multi-agency chronologies, good sharing of information and co-ordinated work were noted as consistent themes for development.

### Impact assessment by OSCB agencies

Organisations identified the key financial and organisational pressures in relation to safeguarding children and their families and adults with care and support needs as: recruitment & retention as well as increasing demand for services. District councils and housing organisations also noted homelessness as placing increased pressure on services. Partners identified the following areas for improvement: (1) good information sharing, working agreements & communication (2) commitment to and engagement with multi-agency work e.g. attendance at safeguarding meetings, co-ordination and shared financial responsibility to address complex issues.

### Self-assessment by OSCB agencies

Information provided assurance that board member agencies across Oxfordshire have policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs and are compliant with the standards. The majority of partners are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice is embedded into their daily work including training and ongoing reflection and support for staff for around safeguarding practices.

### Practitioner Views

1003 practitioners completed an online questionnaire for the OSCB. Of those surveyed 96% of staff have had training in the last three years and 97% have the opportunity to discuss safeguarding within their organisation. When asked what they would change the top three responses were:

1. Better joint working between partners e.g. communications, info sharing,

2. Better training e.g. shorter, tailored to role, using case studies
3. More positive profile of safeguarding work

### Children and young people's Views

Authors of serious case reviews have spoken with children and young people who have been at risk of serious harm and neglect. Children have told us that at times they 'felt like they were missing' or simply 'not seen' by professionals. They also told us how small gestures of kindness and being noticed by professional made a big difference.

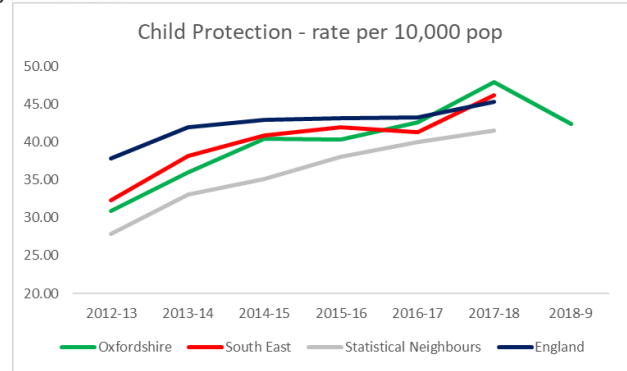
### The local safeguarding data

The data shows that the local context is one of continued increasing demand on services and higher rates of escalation into child protection and care.

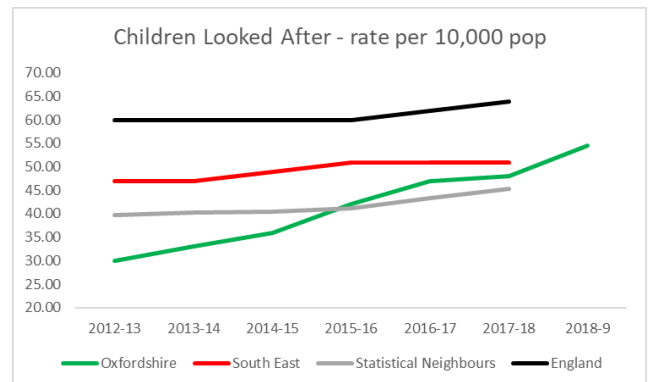
There is some indication that the early help work is beginning to increase and have impact: early help assessments have increased significantly; the number of troubled families worked with has risen and the timeliness of referrals through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub is high. However, early help data does not indicate that neglect is being identified early enough to prevent it being the main reason for children becoming subject to Child protection plans.

The demands on the statutory system are still high. Whilst the number of children subject to a child protection decreased from last year (605 at year end), it still high compared to ten years ago (250 in 2009).

A closer look at child protection data shows that the most common reason for a plan is neglect (70%). It also highlights concern in attendance: qualitative information shows that there concerns about statutory attendance; quantitative information picks up that only 44% of fathers attended conferences concerning their children last year.



The number of children looked after by the local authority rose by 13% from 690 last year to 780 at the end of March 2019 but remains lower than national average. A large proportion of this increase is due to younger children coming in to the system with increasingly complex needs and elevated risk profiles particularly autism, mental health issues and risk of exploitation.



The data raises concern about adverse childhood experiences and the potential for child exploitation e.g. increases in children who go missing three times or more; in those who are victims of crime and in those where the domestic crime involves children. The statistics are similar for the vulnerable groups of children who are out of education on reduced timetables, excluded or working from home. It is notable that there is some overlap between these issues as well as attainment and achievement of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The percentage of children referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services who are seen within 12 weeks continues to be a cause for concern. At



the end of the year this was only 34% compared with a target of 75%. The service continues to face high levels of demand: in 2017/18 there were 566 referrals into CAMHS each month, in 2018/19 this rose to 697.

### Escalated issues

PAQA's review of safeguarding data and intelligence led to the escalation of the four matters. The first concerned domestic abuse: use of the 'young people's pathway'; use of MARAC; police recording of children's voice at domestic abuse incidents; sign up to Operation Encompass. The second was about safeguarding in education: setting and reporting of performance measures to be sure that children are being kept safe in and out of school. The third was about working together and case conferences: reliable reporting on attendance and contributing. The last matter was about sufficiency of placements for children with complex mental health needs which meant that there is a delay in discharging them when they come in to hospital.

### Conclusions

The child population of Oxfordshire has grown by 7% in the last ten years and is estimated to stand at 143,400 young people aged under-18<sup>2</sup>. Alongside this growth there has been increased demand for services particularly towards the high end of the continuum of need. Within this context there are five messages:

1. **There is much to be proud of.**  
The examples in the self-assessments, the evidence in the audits and feedback points to a motivated workforce that want to make a difference and get it right for children in Oxfordshire.

2. **We need to continue to focus on working well together.** Using multi-agency chronologies, sharing information and co-ordinating work is a theme for development. Everyone agrees, and audit work tells us, that these individual actions can make a difference in our system and that there is room for improvement.
3. **We need to Think Family.** We need to better involve families; from ensuring that dads attend conferences and that the views of children and their siblings are understood.
4. **We need to listen to children.** Feedback from reviews and audits indicates that children really value when they feel that they are heard and understood. Sometimes they have felt overlooked. Audits have indicated that we could do this more consistently and thoroughly
5. **The workload is high.** Data tells us that there is a continued demand on the services in the system. This impacts on services' capacity and ability to manage resources for a greater volume of children.
6. **The workload is not straightforward.** Audits and feedback emphasise that the complexity of cases and the capacity of colleagues to deal with them makes it a challenging work environment.

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<sup>2</sup> Source ONS Mid Year Estimates for Oxfordshire for people aged 0-17 2007 & 2017

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Division(s): N/A
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## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2019

### OSAB ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Report by Deputy Director, Adult Social Care

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to
  - a) note that the adult safeguarding partnership is working across Oxfordshire and that work undertaken by the Board and its partners has resulted in a significant decrease in safeguarding concerns being referred into the Local Authority, building on the reduction on concerns started last year; and
  - b) note the priorities for 2019/20.

#### Executive Summary

2. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) are required to report annually on the work of the Board and of its partners, assessing the position of the partnerships in relation to the safeguarding adults at risk within Oxfordshire.
3. Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note that the adult safeguarding partnership is working across Oxfordshire and that work undertaken by the Board and its partners has resulted in a significant decrease in safeguarding concerns being referred into the Local Authority, building on the reduction on concerns started last year. This goes hand-in-hand with an increase in the use of the consultation service offered by the Safeguarding Team.
4. The priorities for 2019 onwards include improving engagement with service users and the wider community. Of note is the Social Isolation and Loneliness Conference being held in partnership with AgeUK on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
5. The annual report is attached as Annex 1.

KAREN FULLER  
Deputy Director, Adult Social Care

Background papers: N/A

Contact: Melanie Pearce  
Service Manager - Safeguarding

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# OSAB

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board



## 2018-19 Annual Report

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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the sixth annual report of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. It is my first for Oxfordshire as I became Chair in April 2019 and I am delighted to see all the good work that has been achieved prior to my arrival under the leadership of the former Chair, Pamela Marsden. I aim to contribute my experience from chairing other Safeguarding Adult Boards in the North of England and on good practice elsewhere in the UK, to build on the good work within the Oxfordshire partnership.

This report outlines the role and function of the Board which is set out in the requirements of the Care Act 2014. It highlights the risks faced by vulnerable people and most importantly what agencies both statutory and in the independent sector are doing to safeguard them.

We have been looking at the patterns in safeguarding activity to inform our priorities for improvement. We are particularly proud of our data around the numbers of safeguarding concerns which have decreased for the second year in a row through the hard work of partners and the increasing use of the consultation service. In the current climate where all agencies are experiencing increasing demands on their time, it is heartening to know practitioners are finding the consultation service valuable.

The Board works closely with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure that we have a consistent view of safeguarding across the age groups and work together on issues that affect both adults and children in Oxfordshire. I look forward to the challenges of the year ahead for the Board with all the concerns there are for the lives of vulnerable people across the County. There has never been a time when safeguarding has been more important.



**Dr Sue Ross**  
Independent Chair of the Oxfordshire  
Safeguarding Adults Board

# WHAT IS THE OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD?

The Care Act 2014 says that Local Authorities must have a Safeguarding Adults Board in place from 1st April 2015.

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board has provided leadership for adult safeguarding across the county since 2009. The Board is a partnership of organisations working together to promote the right to live in safety, free from abuse or neglect.

Its purpose is to both prevent abuse and neglect, and where someone experiences abuse or neglect, to respond in a way that supports their choices and promotes their well-being.

The Care Act says key members of the Board must be the Local Authority; the Clinical Commissioning Groups; and the Chief Officer of Police.

The three key members on the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board are:

- The Director of Adult Social Care, Oxfordshire County Council
- The Director of Quality, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Detective Chief Inspector, Protecting Vulnerable People, Thames Valley Police

The Care Act says these key members must appoint an independent chairperson who has the required skills and experience. Pamela Marsden was the Independent Chair of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board from November 2016 - April 2019. She had many years of relevant experience as a Director within Adult Social Services outside Oxfordshire.

The Care Act 2014 states that the Board can appoint other members it considers appropriate with the right skills and experience. Oxfordshire's Board has senior representatives from the following organisations:



Community Protection Services (Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards & Community Safety)



Local Councillor with Adult Social Care portfolio



Board Members are the senior people in each of the organisations with responsibility for safeguarding. Their role on the Board is to bring their organisations' adult safeguarding issues to the attention of the Board, promote the agreed priorities and work to embed learning throughout their own organisation.

The Board meets four times each year and alternate meetings include a joint meeting with the OSCB (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board) where our joint priorities can be progressed. The Board also has multi-agency subgroups focussing on specific areas of work.

# WHAT HAS THE BOARD BEEN DOING THIS YEAR?



## Improving Multi-agency Working

"working together to ensure people are safe through their life journey"

### **Training Subgroup (TSG)**

Building on feedback from delegates at training, from issues arising in safeguarding concerns raised in Oxfordshire and from learning from case reviews from around the country, in 2018-19 the Board developed new Decision-making in Practice training materials.

Three sessions for care provider services on Making Safeguarding Personal were run over the year. The sessions were well received by delegates and further sessions have been arranged for 2019-2020. Feedback from the sessions has been used to improve what is already discussed around Making Safeguarding Personal in the other OSAB Safeguarding courses.

To support the work of TSG, the Safeguarding Adults Board has recruited a Learning & Engagement Officer. This Officer looks after all the training provided by the Board, ensuring it reflects the current issues in safeguarding. They will be supporting the engagement work the Board is planning for next year.

### **Vulnerable Adults Mortality (VAM) Subgroup**

The VAM group was initially set up in response to the deaths of adults with a learning disability who died while in the care of Southern Health. Once the group have reviewed those deaths, it continued to meet to oversee the reviews required under Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) process.

As a result of the learning from case histories that came to the Vulnerable Adults Mortality Subgroup for analysis, changes were made to how record-keeping is reviewed and quality assured, with a particular focus on how mental capacity is recorded.

### **Performance, Information & Quality Assurance (PIQA) Subgroup**

PIQA receives multi-agency performance information, including data on the use of advocates, a key mechanism for ensuring all work is in line with the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP).

Oxfordshire is acknowledged as a frontrunner nationally in the quality and quantity of its MSP data and practice. The Local Authority is part of a national pilot around the collection and use of MSP data.

The outcome of a safeguarding investigation is categorised as either having the risk reduced, removed or that the risk remains. The service user is also asked whether they are happy with the outcome of the safeguarding investigation. This year PIQA was concerned to find out more about those cases where the risk remained and the service user was recorded as not being happy with the outcome. Out of more than 1,200 investigations, less than 20 fell into this category. From the initial findings of audits into these cases, it appears they were service users who were unhappy an investigation was undertaken at all.

### **Full Board**

Mental capacity is a recurrent issue in safeguarding cases and as such, the Full Board has been kept up-to-date on practice issues relating to mental capacity as well as potential changes to the Deprivation of Liberties Safeguards (DoLS). The Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill received Royal Assent in May 2019 so the Board will receive further briefings on the implications during 2019-20.

Focussing on its own effectiveness, the Full Board also reviewed the membership of the subgroups and narrowed down the information requested from them. Each now has a set of questions that form the basis of the quarterly update to the Full Board.

The Full Board received presentations from the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Coordinator to understand how those released from prison under license are monitored to protect the wider community.

As part of the Board's aim to hear more from frontline practice, practitioners from Adult Social Care and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust presented recent cases to the Full Board to highlight how complex the issues are facing those coming into safeguarding services.

#### *Define and develop a multi-agency risk assessment tool*

In 2018-19 the Board agreed it would look at developing a multi-agency risk assessment tool. The Board brought together a small group to work on this item but encountered numerous barriers to success. It became clear that the complexity of current risk assessment arrangements was based on genuinely different requirements and structures of diverse organisations, making a universal risk assessment tool impractical.



## Monitoring Key Issues

“Ensuring progress is being made on the issues that matter”

The Board decided to monitor the thematic priorities identified by Board Members that remain at the forefront of safeguarding work but whose governance fell to other partnerships.

**Prevention and early intervention** – the strategy around this is owned by the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB). Board Member agencies were consulted on the strategy as it was developed. In 2019-20 the OSAB will request an update report from the HWBB on progress in this area.

**Mental health service provision** – the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified the continued increase in demand on mental health services in Oxfordshire. The OSAB will challenge the HWBB on how needs are being met if the lack of services results in an increase in safeguarding concerns. Public Health are overseeing the Suicide Prevention Strategy, which also forms part of the work around mental health.

**Exploitation** – modern slavery and exploitation is an increasingly important issue across the country and with several high profile cases in the county, it is of particular concern to organisations in Oxfordshire. Locally there is the Anti-Slavery Network and the Modern Slavery Partnership Group who are working towards reducing slavery and exploitation. The Modern Slavery Partnership Group is under the governance of the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership and also reports to the bi-annual joint Safeguarding Board meeting.





## Service User & Community Engagement

"Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent"

### Engagement Group

In 2018-19 the Board established an Engagement Group to improve the links between the Board, frontline workers, community groups, service users and other stakeholders. The group was set up to help develop accessible, clear and concise material to promote safeguarding.

The group has overseen the production of several posters, which are all available on the Board's website, promoting what to do if someone has a concern about themselves, a friend/relative or someone they are working with.

In 2018-19 the Full Board also recruited two lay members to provide another form of challenge to the Board. The lay members helped to review last year's draft annual report and rework several sections to make it as accessible as possible to a wider audience. The report was praised across the partnership and within the leadership teams of various agencies, including elected members.







## Early Help Strategies & Initiatives

“It is better to take action before harm occurs”

The OSAB receives information from services around the work being done to prevent issues occurring. For example, the County Council Fire & Rescue Service provide their data on the Safe & Well visits they conduct. The data has shown that the service continues to achieve its targets in relation to the delivery of Safe and Well visits. The Fire & Rescue Service are looking at how they can improve their approach to targeting their Safe and Well visits to those who are most at risk through incorporating wider data and intelligence gathered by other partners into their risk profiling; for example, could data collected by the district councils on bin emptying be used to identify those with mobility issues and therefore those who might benefit from a Safe and Well visit?

The two Boards have run a safeguarding awareness session for elected members, along with producing a one-sided briefing about adult safeguarding for elected members with the key contacts in case a constituent comes to them with an issue.

The Safeguarding Consultation Service run by the County Council has continued to see increased use, proportional to the decrease in concerns being raised. This indicates the service is helping to identify concerns that do not meet the criteria for being a safeguarding concern before they are formally raised.

In 2019-20, the Performance, Information & Quality Assurance Group will audit the consultation service calls to understand more about who is using the service.

The two Safeguarding Boards have developed a joint training strategy for safeguarding across Oxfordshire. The aim of the strategy is to provide a consistent approach to safeguarding training across the workforce of Oxfordshire. The strategy is has been set to run for three years, with annual reviews to ensure it is still meeting the needs of the workforce.



## Working with the Children's Board

"working together to ensure people are safe from birth until end of life"

The OSAB has worked jointly with the Children's Safeguarding Board on a number of priorities.

Multi-agency **Domestic Abuse** training is now up and running and consultation has just been completed on the next 5-year domestic abuse strategy.

A **Housing** network has been set up led by local housing providers, a multi-agency housing audit is underway and there is good safeguarding board representation.

**Transitions** work ensures that there is good cross-over between child and adult services and any concerns are quickly escalated.

In addition, **modern slavery issues** are reviewed to maintain a clear view of trends and ensure an effective response is being mobilised across the county.



# HOW WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Here are four examples of how the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board is making a difference to the residents of Oxfordshire.

All names have been changed to protect identities

## **Ben**

Ben has a chronic mental health problem requiring regular medication. It came to the point that he was living in squalor (accumulations of rubbish and rotting food, house not cleaned at all, etc). He was isolated and had no social network. Ben was unable to make any changes to his situation by himself.

Through thoughtful and patient engagement with Ben, he was coaxed into agreeing to emergency respite care in a care home where he met people he liked. This was an opportunity to clean up his home. It was also an opportunity to explore with him his options about changing his situation. He now attends a day centre and has a social outlet.

Ben's mental and physical health have improved, as he himself is happy to acknowledge.

## Adam

A concern was raised with the County Council's Safeguarding Team, that Adam, a retired clergy man, was under coercion to live with his daughter in Oxfordshire thereby making him estranged from his wife (who lived in another county) against his will.

As part of this arrangement, Adam was also unable to have private telephone conversations; telephone conversations were monitored with bugging devices by his daughter.

The Safeguarding Team spoke to Adam, his wife, and daughters. They found that Adam indeed lived in Oxford to please his daughter who had been helpful and supportive to him. He was saddened because it was contrary to his spiritual beliefs to live with his wife of over 50 years. He still desired to return to live with his wife and his wife wanted him back home. He was also sad that he had not been free to speak to his wife or pray with her by telephone. The Safeguarding Team facilitated Adam's return to his wife, which made him very happy.

Adam's daughter had complaints about the care provided to her father in the county where he had lived with his wife before coming to live with her. There were concerns about the care agency as there appeared to be no written agreement on what care would be provided, the care that had been provided was poor quality and the charges for what was provided were excessive (nearly £12,000 charged for 2 months care). However, they had felt there was no choice but to pay as there was no alternative provider.

The Safeguarding Team worked with the neighbouring authority to investigate these allegations. The allegations were partially substantiated and Adam confirmed that he received poor care from a particular carer but chose not to name the person because he did not want anyone to be punished. He was happy enough to be reunited with his wife.

The investigation found that the agency was not registered with Care Quality Commission (CQC). The agency is now being investigated by the CQC. The manager of the agency has learned lessons about care planning and working with statutory services to ensure their client's needs are met.

## **Carl**

Carl has a long term physical illness which is affecting his cognitive ability and he is not always able to make relevant decisions.

He was admitted to hospital and he was unable to consent to this. His family were very concerned about his ability to cope with the risks of traffic if he went out alone, and an authorisation was put in place to stop him from leaving the hospital. Carl stated he felt incarcerated.

As he received treatment, Carl's abilities were changing. He was kept fully informed and involved with decisions about his treatment and hospital admission. This enabled the staff to reduce the restrictions in place as Carl's level of functioning changed. Things changed from Carl being prevented from leaving the hospital under any circumstances to being escorted to the local shops to buy day to day items. While he was clear that he'd prefer not to return to the hospital, he nevertheless agreed to do so.



## Eric

The Fire Service raised a number of safeguarding concerns for Eric due to unsafe living conditions. This elderly gentleman lives in a very large house which has been his family home since birth.

The house is severely hoarded, poor electrical wiring, and rodent infestation. Eric lived in one room on the ground floor.

Safeguarding concerns were also raised by Thames Valley Police and Oxford City Council's Environmental Health department. All these agencies worked together for an extended amount of time to keep Eric living safely in his home for as long as possible.

However, as time passed, agencies became increasingly worried as Eric's living conditions deteriorated further. Following a fall and subsequent stay in hospital, Eric left hospital and went to a temporary placement in a care home. During his stay here, Eric's capacity was assessed according to the Mental Capacity Act, concluding that he did not have capacity to understand the risks in his home.

A 'best interest' meeting was held and the decision was taken that Eric would remain in a care setting where his basic needs were met. His property was made safe and passed into the care of solicitors who have Power of Attorney for him. Eric is thriving in his new environment. He is supported with personal care, enjoys hot meals and clean bedding, neither of which were available to him at home, and he has the stimulation of seeing other people daily.



## **Danielle**

Danielle lives with her husband, her dementia is progressing and she never goes out. Her husband was not coping well and often left her alone for prolonged periods. She is distrustful of strangers and reported passers-by to the Police on numerous occasions.

The Fire Service visited jointly with Adult Social Care and the landlord, a housing association, to assess the risks and see what support could be offered to the couple. A multi-agency meeting was then called, attended by Danielle's husband, to work out how to address the problems in the best interests of Danielle.

The housing association agreed to help with repairs and an electrical safety check, Social Care helped Danielle's husband to get a phone line fitted to enable Assistive Technology to be installed, such as a falls pendant and linked smoke and heat alarms. A local personal assistant was identified and arrangements made to gradually introduce her to Danielle, allowing time for trust to build up.

When the Fire Service re-inspected the property, they were satisfied that the fire risks had been significantly reduced. Danielle is now safer in her own home and Danielle's husband feels supported to care for his wife more effectively.

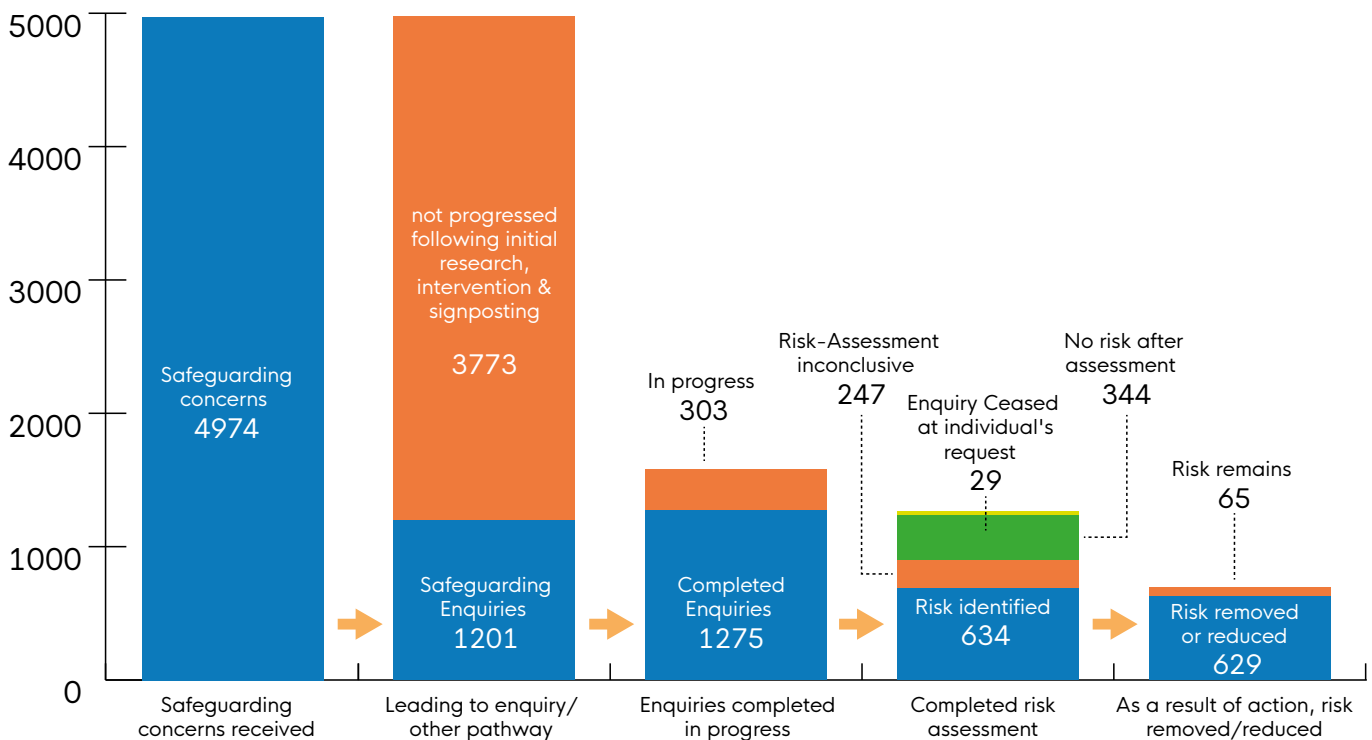




# WHAT ARE THE NUMBERS TELLING US

The safeguarding journey - from raising a safeguarding concern to the outcome of safeguarding enquiries 2018-19

Population 18+ with/without care and support needs



## RAISING OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

We estimate that there are about 43,120 people who have care and support needs in Oxfordshire. This is five and half times the number of adults who received long term support from adult social care in 17-18 (7901)

In 2018-19, Oxfordshire received a total of 4974 concerns about cases of potential or actual harm or abuse. This is equivalent to around 9 concerns for every 1000 adults in the population or around 115 for every 1000 adults with care and support needs (although please note that not all concerns are raised by existing service users)

The 25% reduction in concerns since 16-17 is offset by an increase in consultation calls received by service from around 613 in 17-18 to 1757 in 18-19.

Most concerns (about 63%) were raised by health, carers or social care staff; the remainder were raised mainly by relatives, friends or neighbours, housing agencies and the police.

## RESULTING SAFEGUARDING ENQUIRY PROCESS

A quarter (24.1%) of the concerns received were assessed as requiring follow-up under safeguarding procedures

This is because the people involved were assessed as Experiencing, or being at risk of, harm or abuse; and/or having care and support needs which prevented them from protecting themselves

Those concerns (3373) not followed up as safeguarding enquiries were followed up in other ways, notably referral to trading standards offices, domestic abuse support agencies, the police or the County Council's customer services team

## OUTCOME OF ENQUIRY PROCESS

Safeguarding enquiries can take varying lengths of time to complete, depending on the issues and organisations involved. At 31 March 2019, 1275 enquiries had been completed in 2018-19. Some of these will have commenced in 2017-18. 303 of those started since April 18 were still in progress at the end of the year.

A risk was identified in 694 (54%) of completed enquiries in 2018-19; the risk assessment was inconclusive in 208 cases (16%), there was no risk identified in 344 (27%) and the enquiry was ceased at the individual's request in 29 (2%).

Where a risk was identified – the risk was removed or reduced in 629 (91%) of cases.

# WHAT WILL THE BOARD WORK ON IN 2019-21?

A business planning meeting of the OSAB in May 2018 agreed the following strategic priorities for 2018-2021 with an annual review to ensure they still reflect the safeguarding picture in Oxfordshire.



Early Help  
Strategies &  
Initiatives



Improving Multi-  
agency Working



Monitoring  
Key Issues

## Early Help Strategies & Initiatives

There are further refinements to be made to the annual self-assessment to understand more about the challenges around prevention & early intervention. Further work is needed to ensure the governance for all strands of early help is clear and understood across the partnership.

## Improving Multi-agency Working

Disseminating the lessons from Safeguarding Adult Reviews will be key within 2019-20. The Performance, Information & Quality Assurance Subgroup are also planning a series of mini-Peer Review sessions between Board Member organisations of their safeguarding systems.

## Monitoring Key Issues

Continue to monitor the thematic priorities identified by Board Members: mental health service provision; alcohol and drug abuse and modern slavery and exploitation. These are in addition to the agreed joint priorities for the Safeguarding Boards, currently housing, domestic abuse and transitions from child to adult services.

## Service User & Community Engagement

For 2019-20, Engagement Group the group is supporting the Social Isolation & Loneliness Workshop being run in October 2019. This will be followed up by a series of meetings in each district area, bringing together community groups and services with those at risk of loneliness and those working with people at risk of loneliness.

They will also work on the Adult Safeguarding Awareness Week (18th November 2019).





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding means protecting our right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect. When people have experienced abuse or neglect, safeguarding is about taking actions that are informed by the person's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs.

## **Making Safeguarding Personal**

Making Safeguarding Personal starts with the principle that we are experts in our own life. Things other than safety may be as, or more, important to us; for example, our relationship with our family, or our decisions about how we manage our money. So, staff are always encouraged to ask 'What is important to you?' and 'What would you like to happen next?'

## **An Outcome**

An Outcome is what you hope to get out of the conversations we have, and the work we do with you. Measuring outcomes helps the Board to answer the question "what difference did we make?" rather than "what did we do?"

## **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards apply when a person in a care, or nursing home, or hospital, is subject to continuous supervision and control from staff, and is not free to leave; under the Supreme Court judgement known as 'Cheshire West', they are deprived of their liberty. Once identified, a deprivation of liberty must be authorised either by the Court of Protection order; or under the Deprivation of Liberty

Safeguards in the Mental Capacity Act 2005; or under the Mental Health Act 1983. If it is not authorised, under the law, it is an illegal detention.

**Safeguarding Adult Review**

A Safeguarding Adults Review must be conducted where an adult with care and support needs has died as a result of abuse or neglect and there are concerns about how agencies worked together to safeguard the adult.

A Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) should also be conducted where an adult with care and support needs has experienced serious abuse or neglect as a result of abuse or neglect and there are concerns about how agencies worked together to safeguard the adult. In the context of SARs, something can be considered serious abuse or neglect where, for example the individual would have been likely to have died but for an intervention, or has suffered permanent harm or has reduced capacity or quality of life (whether because of physical or psychological effects) as a result of the abuse or neglect.

Boards can also choose to arrange a review into any other case of an adult in its area with care and support needs.



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Division(s): N/A

## **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report**

**Report by the Assistant Chief Executive**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) **note the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report;**
  - b) **consider and comment on the recommendations made within the report; and**
  - c) **consider whether specific recommendations should be included in the Performance Scrutiny Committee forward plan for more detailed consideration**

#### **Executive Summary**

2. During March 2019, the Council commissioned the Local Government Association to carry out a Corporate Peer Challenge.
3. The feedback report from the LGA was received in July 2019 and is being shared with the Performance Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity for feedback and comment ahead of Cabinet consideration in October 2019.

#### **Introduction**

4. Peer challenge is a core element of the Local Government Association's sector-led improvement offer to local authorities. A peer challenge involves experienced councillor and officer peers from across the local government sector undertaking a 'health-check' of a council and how it operates. Peer challenge is designed as an improvement tool, intended to critically assess participating councils and make suggestions for improvement, based on the analysis and experience of the peer team. The review is not an inspection process.
5. The County Council commissioned a Corporate Peer Challenge to take place in late March 2019 with the intention being to develop a clear and independently verified assessment of our strengths and weaknesses during a period of ongoing change and development across the council.

## Themes of the Peer Challenge

6. The national peer challenge process is structured around the following five core questions on the overall health of the organisation:
  - **Understanding of the local place and priority setting:** Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
  - **Leadership of place:** Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
  - **Organisational leadership and governance:** Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
  - **Financial planning and viability:** Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
  - **Capacity to deliver:** Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
7. In addition, Oxfordshire asked the peer team to address an additional two issues:
  - **Partnership working:** Is there a culture of partnership-working in the council with improving outcomes for citizens as the central aim? Does the council take an appropriate leadership role in the county and wider region and what barriers are in place? Do stakeholders consider the council to be an effective partner in terms of agreeing and delivering shared objectives?
  - **Work on the growth agenda:** Is there a clear narrative on the growth agenda that is shared across the council and understood by stakeholders and citizens? Is the council sufficiently leveraging its leadership role in the interests of improved outcomes for citizens across the widest growth agenda? How embedded and understood is our commitment to the wider growth agenda?
8. The peer challenge process and the subsequent report has been structured around these seven themes.

## **The Peer Challenge Process**

9. The Corporate Peer Challenge was undertaken from 19-22 March 2019. In preparation the Council carried out extensive staff engagement and engaged widely with elected members and partners, including in the production of a Position Statement document.
10. Over the course of four days onsite, the peer team spoke to more than 200 people in more than 60 meetings, site-visits and focus groups. Full details of the Peer Challenge methodology, including the membership of the review team, are set out in section three of the feedback report.
11. On the final day, the team presented to a large audience of staff, members and partners at the Said Business School. The summary presentation and a video of the event have been subsequently widely shared with all participants, councillors, staff and stakeholders.

## **Feedback and Recommendations**

12. The LGA Feedback Report is attached as Annex 1. An Executive Summary in section one summaries the review team's conclusions.
13. Section two makes 11 recommendations:
  - i. Co-develop the vision for Oxfordshire
  - ii. Improve engagement with existing and new communities
  - iii. Address and understand the impact of the Growth Agenda on the whole organisation
  - iv. Establish and communicate the corporate narrative
  - v. Address resource and skills capacity issues
  - vi. Establish effective external and internal communications
  - vii. Establish a stable management team
  - viii. Grow and embed the organisational culture
  - ix. Agree the Investment Strategy and maximise assets and business relationships
  - x. Continue to develop the innovative model between the County and district authorities
  - xi. Develop new approaches to locality boards
14. From section four, the report is then structured around the seven themes (five national and two local) as set out above.
15. Following receipt by the Council in July, this report was circulated to councillors, staff, participants in the process and other stakeholders.

## Prioritised activity and next steps

16. During the period that the feedback report was developed by the LGA team, progress has been made against several recommendations. The following recommendations have been prioritised so far:

- iii. Address and understand the impact of the Growth Agenda on the whole organisation*

The development of a healthy place shaping approach to growth is being taken forward to focus community centred planning. Services are being challenged to incorporate full consideration of the implications of growth pressures in service and business plans and in transformation plans for the shape of the future organisation.

- v. Address resource and skills capacity issues and vi. Establish effective external and internal communications*

Significant progress has been made through the transformation programme towards delivery of recommendations tackling communications and resource, skills and capacity. Progress on the Transformation Programme is reviewed by the Joint Audit & Governance and Performance Scrutiny (Transformation) Sub-Committee, most recently in July.

- xii. Establish a stable management team and x. Continue to develop the innovative model between the County and district authorities*

The stabilisation of the senior management team has continued through a number of permanent and joint appointments and with the establishment of new posts. These include the appointment of the Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Services, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Director Human Resources and a number of other senior sub-director appointments. Further interim arrangements have been put in place to stabilise the management team and new strategic posts were established by Council in July. The ongoing use of a section 113 agreement as the framework to enable joint working with Cherwell District Council and appointments to joint posts (which is specifically raised in the report), was agreed at Cabinet in April.

- ix. Agree the Investment Strategy and maximise assets and business relationships*

In July, following consideration by the Performance Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet endorsed a new investment strategy and revised governance arrangements which will be recommended to Council in September 2019.

17. The next step for the Peer Challenge Feedback report is for the full recommendations to be considered by Cabinet for acceptance and

prioritisation with further activity required in all areas if the recommendations are agreed. At this point, Cabinet will also be asked to consider where new and additional activity will be required to deliver recommendations and if agreed, that these actions should be incorporated into corporate planning, including where appropriate service and resource planning and the transformation programme.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

18. There are no direct financial or staffing impacts arising from this report. Resources required to meet any future proposals for change developed from the Corporate Peer Challenge will be identified through service and resource planning process in the usual way.

### **Equalities Implications**

19. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. Where any changes are subsequently developed that involve changes to service or service delivery, equality implications will need to be considered throughout the development process and formally, through Service and Community Impact Assessments as required.

#### **Annex 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report, July 2019**

CLAIRE TAYLOR  
Interim Assistant Chief Executive

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Robin Rogers, Strategy Manager  
September, 2019

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# Corporate Peer Challenge **Oxfordshire County Council**

19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019

Feedback Report

## 1. Executive Summary

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is pursuing an ambitious agenda for change and improvement across its communities and in the way it operates. It has staff and councillors committed to the communities they serve and motivational leadership.

The Council is in a good financial starting position. There are some financial challenges in Children Services but overall management of finances and budgets is sound and levels of reserves are adequate. The Council is continuing a Transformation programme which aims to make savings of at least £50m by 2022/23. This level of savings should be achievable. Most planning is required for demand management savings which require more attention. In general the council's approach to finance is rather traditional and risk averse. The Council needs to have a bolder attitude and should agree ambitious strategies and plans for investment, asset management, commercialisation and income generation.

The County's Growth Agenda is ambitious with local and national significance for the south east and the Oxford - Cambridge arc development. The Council with its partners have secured £500m of inward investment for housing and infrastructure. The bids contained plans for accelerating the construction of 100,000 new homes alongside investment in infrastructure and productivity. Now that the project is moving into the delivery phase, a narrative around the agenda needs to be co-developed with partners and the community and communicated to both staff and residents. The narrative needs to explore the potential benefits for existing communities including economic growth that reaches everyone along with wider access to high productivity, satisfying and more secure jobs for local people. Whole council engagement is also needed on the impact of growth on the council itself. Services such as Adults, Children and Libraries are all likely to be affected by increased demand but can also benefit from capital investment and the development of more sustainable communities.

Alongside Cherwell District Council, the County Council is part of an exciting and unique new model of partnership working in local government. The two tier model sees officers working across both the county and a district and has real potential to offer a new model of non-structural reform both locally and nationally. The Chief Executive and several other senior managers are currently working across both organisations under section 113 arrangements (where an officer may be temporarily placed at the disposal of another authority) This arrangement is under planned review and it is important for the organisation to get beyond this stage in order that it can continue developing the partnership and working on other key agendas.

OCC's relationships with most of its partners including the voluntary and community sector are stronger now than they were, with partners feeling that they are able to engage with the council as equals. Relationships with the district councils are also far better than in the recent past when unitary proposals were being pursued. In Oxfordshire's circumstances, reorganisation should remain off the table. The narrative around the long term goal for the Cherwell partnership also needs to be clearer or potential partners amongst the other district councils may be put off. This unique model has the real potential to deliver a County Council that is resident focussed, agile and with more responsive decision making. The mix of staff will "bring the best of both" together in an exemplar model.

There is more work to do on developing a collective vision for the county of Oxfordshire for residents, the wider community, businesses, partners and staff. Corporate language can be passive rather than being clear about how the Council will drive or initiate change. This collective narrative needs to be developed with partners and the community and communicated widely.

The council should be developing its own corporate narrative with collective political ownership and understanding of the vision for the council. The Corporate Plan 2019-2022 needs to be more contextualised around the growth agenda and OCC needs to be clearer about what its role and priorities are.

OCC is associated with the national and international brand that is “Oxford”. It should be making far more of the brand as an asset for engaging with businesses, promoting the local economy and the growth agenda. The council has a world class brand and its communications also need to be world class. Both its’ internal and external communications need to be improved. External communications need to be more strategic and focussed on corporate priorities. A greater breadth of internal communication is needed so that staff can fully understand the impact of the growth agenda and the culture change that Transformation will deliver.

The Cabinet should be given more political space to talk about corporate objectives such as the growth agenda and transformation. They have indicated that want to be able to support difficult decisions in the future but need more information and understanding about the issues. There should also be wider engagement of non-executive Councillors. They are a valuable resource for the council and could be more influential in locality and community working.

The Leader and new Chief Executive are providing the organisation with motivational leadership. Staff are passionate about providing services to residents. However old ways of silo working still need to be addressed. Staff want more opportunities to work with colleagues across the council. Culture change is happening and the Transformation programme will continue the process. Staff are conscious that there has been a pause in the culture change journey in the past year or two and they now want to see progress. Whilst transformation has already begun in some teams, empowerment needs to be real and understood by all. Peers heard that staff think of the Council as a “big” organisation. This perception may be hampering the ability of the organisation to be agile, identifying and responding quickly to new priorities and new ways of working.

OCC is operating in a very tight employment market. It is competing for skills and resources with other public sector employers and the private sector. This has created risks around its capacity to deliver both growth and transformation. The Council’s Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR/OD) functions needs investment in both staff and systems to be able to respond to these challenges.

OCC’s locality working has some strengths but it needs to be re-visited. Both Members and officers think that the Locality Meetings could be improved. There may be a role for district councils in OCC’s locality working perhaps by being included in the Locality Meeting or holding joint parish forums and/or co-funding initiatives. This might also involve reviewing the best geography for boards and other area working approaches. Locality working has the potential to become a key enabler as communities grow and new communities are established.

## 2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, many of which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

1. **Co-develop the vision for Oxfordshire.** There is no collectively owned overall single vision for the county amongst staff, partners, residents and the wider community. OCC should work with its partners to co-develop the vision for the future of the county in the light of the growth agenda. This will help both new and settled residents understand the plans and potential opportunities and impact.
2. **Improve engagement with existing and new communities.** OCC is still seen as rather distant from communities. Some residents feel that the council lacks transparency and that engagement around issues like the Growth Agenda is not as good as it could be. The council has to be better at delivering the message that growth is about creating sustainable and healthy communities including for existing communities, and not just houses and infrastructure.
3. **Address and understand the impact of the Growth Agenda on the whole organisation.** There are plans for acceleration of 100,000 additional houses which is a 30% population increase for the county. The impact of this additional population has not yet been fully grasped across the organisation. Services such as Adults, Children and Libraries are going to face significant additional demands on what are already stretched services. Teams need to start some initial planning to consider what the extra demand might be and how it will be met
4. **Establish and communicate the corporate narrative.** There is confusion and a lack of understanding about the corporate narrative. Although the Thriving Communities term is well known by staff they know little about what is supporting it. Cabinet Members need to start working outside of their portfolios to establish and own collective responsibility for the corporate narrative.
5. **Address resource and skills capacity issues.** The council is operating in a tight labour market. It has ongoing recruitment and retention issues across the organisation. The Growth and Transformation agendas will stretch its resource and skills capacity further. Non-delivery of the Growth agenda and the transformation programme due to lack of capacity is a significant risk. Early investment in both HR and OD is needed so that these issues can start to be addressed.
6. **Establish effective external and internal communications.** The council needs to improve its communications so that messages are more strategically focussed on corporate priorities and better use is made of social media. Internal communications need ways of being delivered so that all staff can hear the messages from the top of the organisation and feed their views back up.
7. **Establish a stable management team (Settle the s113 issue).** There is a degree of uncertainty amongst staff about the senior management team. A number of senior managers have left the council recently and some staff view the Chief Executive's and

some other senior appointments as being interim or probationary. This situation needs to be resolved as quickly as possible so that a stable senior team can be put in place. The s113 appointments are due for review after which the rest of the senior team should be appointed or confirmed.

8. **Grow and embed the organisational culture.** Staff are passionate about providing good services. They want to feel empowered to take initiatives and many are frustrated about the way the organisation has been “on pause” in recent years. The Transformation programme is part of continuing the change of culture that is already underway. It needs to be delivered at pace to capitalise on staff enthusiasm for progress.
9. **Agree the Investment Strategy and maximise assets and business relationships.** The council has a draft investment strategy. This needs to be agreed so that the organisation can start to make the best use of its property and other assets as well as its business relationships. The strategy needs to be less risk averse about investment and opportunities for income generation.
10. **Continue to develop the innovative model between the County and district authorities.** The Cherwell Partnership model is itself still developing. There are opportunities in the future to scale it up with other districts. OCC should keep engaging with the district councils on partnership working. It needs to ensure that the door is always open for other districts to come on board when the time is right for them.
11. **Develop new approaches to locality boards.** Locality Meetings are generally seen as not being as effective as they could be. They are not well supported by Members and partner organisations and agendas are often set indiscriminately by officers. New localised approaches need to be considered. District councils could be included in the Locality Boards. The Boards could also have budgets and decision making devolved to them and could play an important role in the successful delivery of the planned growth.

### 3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

#### The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Oxfordshire County Council were:

- Trevor Holden – Managing Director Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils
- Jon McGinty – Managing Director Gloucester City Council / Commissioning Director Gloucestershire County Council
- Paula Hewitt – Lead Director Economic and Community Infrastructure – Somerset CC
- Jason Vaughan – Strategic Director Dorset Councils Partnership
- Cllr William Nunn – Leader Breckland District Council (Con)
- Cllr Sarah Osborne – Group Leader Lewes DC and County Cllr East Sussex County Council (Lib Dem)
- Cllr Alan Rhodes – Group Leader Nottinghamshire CC (Labour)
- Sophie Poole – Programme Manager LGA
- Gill Elliott - Review Manager LGA

## Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges cover. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

In addition to these questions, you asked the peer team to consider/review/provide feedback on:

- Growth Agenda
- Partnership Working

## The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent 4 days onsite at Oxfordshire CC (OCC), during which they:

- Spoke to more than 200 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 60 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.

- Collectively spent more than 280 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 7 weeks in OCC

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit (19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.



## 4. Feedback

### 4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

The Corporate Plan 2019-2022 “Thriving Communities for Everyone in Oxfordshire” articulates the council’s ambitions and outcomes but it is not sufficiently contextualised around the growth agenda which is a national level growth project and the biggest in the country. OCC needs to be clearer about what its priorities and leadership role are, and how its leadership role is complemented by the leadership role of others.

OCC understands its local context well and has used that knowledge to form the basis of several successful bids which have secured £500m of funding for growth in a single agenda. OCC is also a significant player in the Arc project to develop better links across an arc of the country between Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

OCC is generally seen as having good relationships with its partners and treating them as equals. It has increased collaboration and understanding of the Health agenda and relationships with social care partners and the community and voluntary sector are good. The Growth Board is a model of good practice. There are opportunities for better working with partners. Some partners think that it is a case of “you only know what’s going on if you are in the inner circle” and that few people actually have the whole picture. It is important to have multi-channel messages and good communication routes with partners.

The council is listening and acting on the priorities of young people. We saw an excellent example in VOXY (Voice of Oxfordshire Youth) and the Care Council where young people feel that they have influence over OCC policies and that the council is genuinely interested in what they have to say. They would like the council to advertise VOXY more widely.

The corporate narrative should focus on developing new communities and supporting growing ones. The impact of growth on existing communities needs to be better understood and articulated. It is important that the growth agenda is not seen as being just about infrastructure. It is also about building sustainable and cohesive communities. There will be a 30% increase in the number of houses in the County and that impact has to be considered by OCC with its partners and communicated to existing residents.

The impact of the growth agenda is not yet fully understood at a corporate level. The huge number of new homes and increased population will have a significant impact on other service areas such as Children’s services, schools and the health agenda. There need to be multi-channel messages for staff to know and understand these issues better. Communications and engagement within the council need to be improved to deliver these messages.

There is no localities communication strategy or co-ordinated plan for engaging residents in decision making at the local level. In the light of the significant changes that are planned the council needs to undertake some two-way engagement with residents. Consultation documents are too lengthy and are putting off residents from fully participating in them. OCC also has to listen and act on the Residents’ Survey. Insights and intelligence about views of customers and residents’ needs to be shared across all departments so that there is not just a singular view of citizens. Corporate performance data needs to be

delivered, reviewed and acted on before it is out of date. OCC needs an updated system to draw out “live data” which is genuinely useful.

Co-production of policies and services needs to be done more widely across the organisation. There were some really good examples of the resident voice in decision making in adult services e.g. the Co – Production Board; Champions Network.

## 4.2 Leadership of Place

OCC has access to the national and internationally known brand of “Oxford”. For marketing and economic purposes this is a far stronger brand than that of Oxfordshire, which is essentially an administrative entity. At the moment the council is not fully exploiting the potential of its brand. Whilst the University and the City Council may also claim “Oxford” as their brand, OCC can still use it as a “hook” for engaging with business, partners and having conversations with its’ growing communities particularly around the themes of economy and investment.

OCC’s relationships with the District Councils has moved on from the unitary debates of the past few years. Relationships with most of the district councils are very positive and there is now a need for greater boldness in developing these further. The partnership with Cherwell District Council is seen both locally and nationally as a possible new model for two tier working. The Districts are all watching to see where the Cherwell model is going. OCC needs to be very positive about the new partnership model, realising that there is room for a different narrative, one that will give opportunities for all the Districts including Oxford City Council to participate. The “scalability” of the model needs to be considered as different Districts could have different levels of involvement. The peer team appreciate that the Cherwell relationship is at an early stage and also that there are capacity issues within OCC at present that would prevent it moving at a faster pace on this.

Partners describe OCC as good leader and partner working with them as equal partners. The Leader and Chief Executive show personal commitment to building relationships. The Leader was commended for being able to seek consensus with partners, for example around the Housing Growth Deal. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) commented that there had been ‘significant improvements in partnership working across the health system in last twelve months’ and highlighted the need for OCC to rapidly address key appointments such as the Director of Public Health and the Director of Adult Social Care. The collective narrative for the county needs to be co-owned and co-produced by all the key agencies. At present there is no single high impact forum that brings together key partners across the range of the place leadership agenda.

OCC’s partnerships with business around innovation and robotics are a really good example of place leadership. The Council has been instrumental in securing external funding which has enabled the universities, and entrepreneurs to collaborate and bring solutions from research to implementation more quickly than ever before. The Innovation Hub has transferred the learning to other council departments such as Adult Social Care to maximise efficiency and improve services and they are working towards the deployment of other projects in departments such as Children Services. The excellent leadership OCC has shown in supporting innovation could be developed further with engagement with more local authorities and through clear and consistent corporate backing for the Innovation and Research area. A tight labour market and current lack of suitable

workspace are felt to be risks to growth in this area. OCC is working with business to develop an apprenticeship training scheme to be part of the future workforce in these industries.

There is no real collective overall single vision for the county amongst staff, partners, residents and the wider community. Corporate language is passive e.g. “Thriving Communities” rather than being clear about what the council will do to create these thriving communities. The Growth narrative and the vision for the future of the county is not clearly understood by residents. Better communication and engagement is needed to enable settled communities to understand the plans and the potential impact for them as well as the opportunities growth will bring. Place is spoken of in terms of infrastructure, not communities and neighbourhoods. Going forward greater knowledge of diverse and growing communities of interest in the county will be needed to accommodate and respond to the needs of a huge population influx.

Locality working across the county needs improvement. There should be more opportunities generally for OCC to work at a local level. Locality Meetings were described to the peer team as being “hit and miss”. They are not well supported by Members with agendas generally being centrally set by officers. District councils could play a part in OCC’s locality working perhaps by being included in the Locality Meetings or holding joint parish forums, or potentially pooling funding for projects. The geographies of the boards need to be considered, in collaboration with districts if they are to co-own them. Locality Boards have the potential to become key enablers as communities grow and new communities are established.

#### **4.3 Organisational leadership and governance**

The Leader and new Chief Executive are providing the organisation with really motivational leadership. Within the organisation there is a genuine appetite for change. The new Chief Executive is viewed as a positive agent for change, but what is now needed is some significant pace and delivery on issues like Transformation and new ways of working. There was a feeling in some parts that the current drive for change will pass and then OCC will settle back into its traditional ways of working. Whilst support for the Chief Executive’s approach was voiced in our meetings, the approach needs wider and clearer enforcement to become embedded.

The organisation has some strength in its senior management team, but there has been some recent turnover of senior managers. The Chief Executive now needs to be allowed to move beyond the s113 and establish her future senior management structure. This will provide some stability and more agents of change to help deliver new ways of working and culture change. If short term appointments do have to be made they should be for at least twelve months and not badged as interim. At the moment there is a single point of failure at the level of the Chief Executive which is a risk for the organisation.

The Leader and Chief Executive are showing bold leadership. An example of this is the Cherwell Partnership. The relationship is unique in local government. Members of the extended leadership team (ELT) were very enthusiastic about the partnership. Although communications and relationships still need to be improved around the partnership there is still a real appetite for it.

There are good officer and Member relationships within the council. Senior Members want more information and briefings on issues like Transformation to help them understand and support what might be difficult decisions in the future. Portfolio members want to be part of the new corporate drive. They need to be given the space to discuss and own the changes. They are keen to be more engaged on corporate issues rather than just concentrating on the detail of their own portfolios.

There is confusion and a lack of understanding of the corporate narrative. Whilst the Thriving Communities term is well known, what else is supporting it? There needs to be greater collective cabinet responsibility for a truly corporate narrative. Backbenchers could have a greater role as community leaders who can drive locality working. Local member knowledge and intelligence about their communities is generally not used enough.

The scrutiny function is relatively strong and it is valued in the organisation. The Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is also respected and valued by partners. The scrutiny model is a good one but it could go even further in terms of both policy and process. There are too few boards to handle the work programme and little time for “deep dives” on issues. It should also be utilised more by backbenchers and opposition members.

OCC is viewed by partners, residents and even its own staff as being traditional, slow and risk averse - an organisation that kicks decisions down the road. It is still very much an organisation of silos where “directorates are king”. There is a recognition that this is shifting but it is part of a long standing culture. Whilst Transformation is very much about changing that culture, staff are still unclear about what it means for them and are hesitant to just “get on and do” Relationships of trust between the Chief Executive’s Direct Reports, the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) and the next tier of managers are still forming. ELT is relatively new and the new senior managers’ forum has only met twice. People are being empowered but still lack confidence that they will be supported to take decisions.

Individual performance management needs to balance appropriate levels of empowerment with accountability. The introduction of a new approach to performance management (12-3-2) has not been universally well-adopted and there is clearly inconsistency in the extent and quality of 1:1 meetings between staff and managers.

Corporate and service performance monitoring is starting to give more emphasis to outcomes linked to the corporate plan. At the moment performance reports go to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis, but this is moving to monthly to make data and reporting more current and up to date. The Council will need to ensure that this does not lead to micromanagement and ‘over-steering’.

The corporate risk register is under review. At the moment it does not reflect the context or priorities facing the Council. An example of this is the risk that there will be a lack of capacity to deliver the growth agenda.

#### **4.4 Financial planning and viability**

OCC has some financial challenges but overall it is in a good place. Demand pressures and overspending in Children Services are an issue, but overall the council’s management of its

finances and budgets is sound and levels of reserves are adequate. The Leader and portfolio Member for Finance have a good understanding of the council's finances and all-member finance briefings are well attended.

OCC has a good track record of balancing its budget. It has taken some tough decisions on cuts early on and this has put it in a good position. The external auditors had no adverse opinion about the council's finances and the conclusion about its value for money was positive. Internal audit is effective and peers heard of good joint work by the audit working group and the Audit and Governance committee on Children's Safeguarding report and Mental Health partner delivery. Generally there was a tendency in the organisation to view the solving of finance problems as the finance team's job rather than it being corporately owned.

OCC is clearly very effective at attracting public and private inward investment as evidenced by the growth funds and housing infrastructure funds of over £500m. However the potential lack of resources and capacity to deliver the growth agenda is a major reputational and financial risk that is not captured in the corporate risk register.

In general the council's approach to finance is rather traditional and risk averse. It needs to have a bolder attitude and more informed discussion around investment, commercialisation, asset management and property. The debate about high versus low investment risk is still ongoing, but there is a lack of understanding around investment and income generation. There is a draft investment strategy but it has not yet been finalised. The transformation of the Finance function could be a good opportunity to change the culture of the way the organisation deals with these issues.

Savings from the Transformation programme should be achievable as there are plenty of obvious areas for greater efficiency. The prevention/demand management strand of Transformation needs the greatest attention and ownership. There is some doubt as to whether the organisation will deliver the planned savings in this area and it was not clear what plan B might look like.

#### **4.5 Capacity to deliver**

The council has a capable and dedicated workforce who have a willingness and desire for change. This is a key strength for the organisation. Staff welcome the opportunity to talk about what the council delivers with residents being at the heart of the discussion. The Transformation programme is adapting and building on the existing culture. The partnership with Cherwell is bringing new insights and opportunities as well as broadening the talent pool which is to be welcomed.

The relationship between management and the Trades Unions relationships are good which will be an asset when there are discussions about restructuring or new ways of working. Meetings between managers and the unions happen regularly and unions have met with senior managers to discuss Transformation. They also meet with the ruling group and opposition members. The Trades Union are pragmatic about change but reflected that their members feel that they are constantly being re-structured and consequently just want to get on with their jobs.

Resourcing the Growth Agenda adequately is going to be a big challenge for the council. It is still dealing with the legacy of the Carillion collapse and many of its property and estates staff are already at full capacity. There is likely to be a shortage of Planners, Designers, Modellers

and Engineers amongst other skills. Transformation is also going to require additional internal resource even with the input from PWC and other external consultants.

Business intelligence is fragmented across the council. The council should consider how it can bring it together in a central hub so that it is accessible to all departments and services. Data currently focusses on needs and weaknesses rather than considering the assets and strengths in the community. Intelligence is generally “backward looking” It needs to be more dynamic with better use made of predictive analytics. HR and Finance need to be seen as intelligence assets and not simply transactional services, with the organisation set up to benefit from the insight the functions can bring.

Communications within the council both internally and externally need to be improved. Communication should be owned at the top by the Leader and politicians and used to drive the corporate agenda. The Communication function itself should be given greater clarity on the strategic intent, and then empowered to design and innovate how the communications are delivered, through which channels to which audiences. Communications can be reactive and aimed at meeting the needs of services rather than the priorities of the council. The media view the council’s communications team is that it is just a press office defending the council’s reputation with the media as the enemy. The council’s digital output is insufficient and lacks ambition. Internally, a wider range of internal communication would see more people receiving the messages. A cascade briefing system with key issues from the top of the organisation would be helpful.

Enabling services including HR, IT and Communications are all critical to Transformation and could be supporting it better. The HR/OD function needs further investment and support. A new Head of HR has recently been appointed but is yet to take up her post. The council is operating in an extremely tight labour market and it needs to position itself as an employer of choice compared to other public sector and private organisations. There are ongoing recruitment and retention issues across the council including social workers and IT staff, meaning officer capacity is already stretched. IT systems in the council are generally seen as slow and in need of modernisation to enable services and to deliver corporate priorities.

The council need to get better at quicker decision-making throughout the organisation. Internal processes are heavy and bureaucratic making decision making slow. There needs to be a clear and simple governance structure put in place. The corporate centre requires review in terms of its structure. A review and refocus of its systems would re-position the roles as enablers of policies and priorities rather than just being seen as a support function.

#### **4.6 The Growth Agenda**

The Growth Agenda is a significant opportunity for OCC and its partners to deliver much needed housing and infrastructure development in the county of Oxfordshire. £500m of inward investment has been secured to accelerate the building of 100,000 homes. There are clearly a lot of positives around the joint working on the growth agenda. All the local authorities are signed up and working together on the growth deal. The County has successfully shared leadership roles with others, leading or supporting depending on the most likely approach to delivering the desired outcomes.

Partners said that they find OCC easy to work with. A Growth Board has been established. There are good relationships with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Council is seen by business partners as being far more engaged with them than before. Joint Spatial Planning

is being done for the whole county by OCC and the district councils and there is a focus on Healthy Place-Shaping.

A collective vision about the Growth Agenda needs to be produced and a clearer narrative developed. This should be co-authored with partners and the community. There is a lot of positive talk about growth but not amongst residents. Their concerns are around a lack of transparency which they feel has left them “in the dark”, housing development making traffic worse particularly along the A40, high house prices, too many houses, losing rural areas because of overdevelopment and the likely impact of a huge influx of newcomers. Others referred to the stop start development around the city e.g. the Frideswide development as an example of poor delivery. OCC and its partners need to be selling the positive aspects of the growth agenda including messaging focussed on the ambition of building healthy and sustainable communities.

OCC staff need to have a greater understanding of the wider impact of the Growth agenda on other services within the council. There is likely to be an increase in the demand for services like Children, Adults and Libraries. Equally, there are significant opportunities for new ways of working and for community and service sustainability and for addressing long-standing community concerns. The council needs to be considering the full cost and opportunity model of the Growth agenda.

The Growth agenda is moving into its delivery phase. At the moment this is a potential risk. Full delivery plans are in development but there is a known requirement for more skilled professionals and other resources. There are already shortages of infrastructure planners, engineers and modellers. Estates staff are still dealing with the legacy of the collapse of Carillion. All the local authorities in the Oxford –Cambridge ARC area are competing for the same resources. Delivery will need a mixed economy as partners cannot afford to rely on a single contractor. Lack of capacity may lead to delays which will mean that costs will go up. There is also a reputational risk to the council if delivery is severely delayed.

#### **4.7 Partnership Working**

Partnership working is becoming a real strength of the organisation. Engagement with town and parish councils has continued to improve. Collaboration with the VCS is much stronger now despite the need for funding cuts. There are pockets of co-production with the VCS, and opportunities to learn from the good practice in the Adult Social Care Department. VCS organisations would like to have better representation on some of the partnership boards such as the Health and Wellbeing Boards or sub boards. There has been some good working with Health partners. The county is putting a significant amount of funding into Mental Health and prevention strategies. There are pooled budgets with districts for Homelessness and Domestic abuse. OCC is well regarded by partners for its emergency planning. It has also worked well with partners on infrastructure delivery and housing investment fund bids. Relationships with Business and the University are good.

Relationships with the District Councils are also good and much better than they were. Partnership working with the Districts improved significantly once the unitary issue was not pursued and this should remain off the table. The housing growth deal has since helped to cement the relationships. This is an area that will always need to be given attention to prevent relationships regressing to the way they have been in recent years.



The partnership with Cherwell District Council is a new way of thinking and a chance to prove the concept of a type of two tier working that does not involve a unitary council. There is a parity of esteem between the two Leaders which is hugely helpful to the model. There has been joint appointment made for the Head of HR and Monitoring Officer posts as well as a joint post in adult social care and housing based at Cherwell. Joint appointments have also been made for the management of Regulatory Services. In time the Cherwell model could have wider application with other Districts. However, the narrative around the long term goal needs to be clearer or potential partners may be put off. There is still some suspicion that it is a first step towards “unitarisation”.

The council’s relationship with Oxford City Council is still a little difficult. OCC should be cultivating the symbiotic relationship with the City. As the urban centre of the county of Oxfordshire it is really important to the rural hinterland. Each entity needs the other for services such as transport. For example, at the moment, OCC allocates the same £/mile in its highways budget for each road in each district in order to demonstrate parity of treatment. Yet with a third of the total employment in the county, the majority of journeys involve Oxford City and this disparity could be recognised in budgetary terms. Similarly, whilst rail travel through flow across the county needs developing, it is acknowledged that there is a particular bottleneck at Oxford Station. So there is a case for treating different areas of the county differently rather than equally, including through expanded locality working.

A greater degree of corporate engagement with partners is needed. The tendency for working in internal silos is affecting cross departmental engagement. At the moment corporate engagement feels a little piecemeal and not holistic. It is good in Health, Social Care and Spatial Planning but partners in other areas like Education and Skills described the county council as “paternalistic”. Other partners wanted greater openness and transparency from the council. Relationships with the media need to be built on.

## **5. Next steps**

### **Immediate next steps**

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Will Brooks, Principal Adviser, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). His contact details are: e-mail [william.brooks@local.gov.uk](mailto:william.brooks@local.gov.uk)

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

## **Follow up visit**

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

## **Next Corporate Peer Challenge**

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before 2024.

## **Example of good practice**

### **Partnerships around Innovation**

The Council is pooling its' innovation funding with business to create a centre of excellence for autonomous vehicles. As a result of the collaboration, driverless vehicles are starting to be rolled out in Oxford. Joint work on robotics is also pushing Oxford to be the home of robotics in the country. OCC is working with business to develop an apprenticeship training scheme to be part of the future workforce in these industries. The Council has been instrumental in the development of a "living laboratory" approach to enable the universities, entrepreneurs and users to collaborate and bring solutions from research to implementation more quickly than ever before. It has also been a key player in securing external funding for projects for the county and Oxfordshire is now establishing itself as a centre of excellence for autonomous vehicles. Joint work on robotics is also pushing the County to be the home of robotics in the country.

Division(s): N/A

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2019

### Development of the Corporate Plan

#### Report by Assistant Chief Executive

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) note the proposals for updating the current Corporate Plan for the period 2020-23; and
  - b) comment on the new and prioritised issues for consideration set out at paragraph 8.

#### Executive Summary

2. The Corporate Plan will be reviewed for the business year 2020/21 to ensure that the document accurately reflects progress and priorities. The revised plan will be recommended to Council in February 2020 alongside Service and Resource Planning proposals. It is the intention to retain the existing vision and priorities, updated to incorporate new and emerging issues.
3. The Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the development proposals for the plan and to comment on the new and prioritised issues which are being considered for inclusion or additional emphasis.

#### Background

4. The Corporate Plan is a key document for the council, setting out our future strategic direction and how this will be achieved. The structure of the current Corporate Plan was agreed in July 2018 for the period 2018- 2021 and sets the County Council's overarching strategy for that period. The plan was subsequently refreshed in parallel with Service and Resource Planning for the period 2019-2022 to ensure that the document accurately reflected updated priorities and focus. A revised Corporate Plan was therefore agreed by Council in February 2019. Ahead of detailed development work, there is now an opportunity to consider drivers for corporate development and agree ambitions for change.
5. This paper sets out the process for a further annual revision of the Corporate Plan to create a document for the period 2020-23, to be recommended for approval by Council in February 2020. It also introduces the core new and prioritised issues which are being considered for inclusion or additional emphasis within the plan.

## Updating the Corporate Plan

6. The vision and priorities of the Thriving Communities plan provide an understood and familiar structure to drive impact and delivery, which is increasingly supported by more effective business planning and reporting arrangements. It is proposed to retain the existing structure (including the existing vision and priorities) for the plan to be agreed for 2020/21, with a view to a full plan review in the following year.
7. While the overall structure is considered fit for purpose, since the original development and subsequent refresh of the current Corporate Plan, a number of new issues and themes have emerged alongside existing areas of activity that have gained additional prominence. These will need to include issues identified through the Corporate Peer Review process undertaken in March 2019 and reported elsewhere on this agenda.
8. At the corporate level, initial issues for consideration include:
  - Climate action, the council's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 and other environmental issues including air quality;
  - Investment and property strategies and restated ambition in these areas;
  - Addressing the wider impact and opportunities of growth across services and the community;
  - Our role in addressing inequalities in social, economic and health outcomes;
  - Locality working and local leadership including devolution of services, the need for more impactful area governance and the community leadership role of members;
  - Ongoing ambition to expand our role in fostering social action including developing our relationship with the voluntary and community sectors;
  - The further development of the Cherwell-OCC partnership alongside further development of wider partnership working;
  - New and emerging cross-cutting strategies including for digital and culture;
  - The relationship with health and the development of an Integrated Care System;
  - Continuing focus on the role of prevention and managing demand;
  - Future workforce.
9. The overall corporate planning framework includes the Corporate Plan itself, finance and resource plans and the business plans of individual directorates and services.
10. It is proposed that these issues should be considered alongside existing priorities for formal incorporation into the overall corporate plan framework to drive action and outcomes. Work will be required to identify the tangible change associated with each priority area and how the issue is best incorporated into the overall planning framework – whether into the Corporate

Plan or into service specific plans. Where issues are agreed as priority areas, consideration should be given through the budget process of how refocussing on these issues affects budget priorities.

11. In addition to revising plan priorities, within the current cycle of corporate planning, there is an opportunity to redesign and re-present elements of the current Corporate Plan to better articulate to and for residents, members, staff and partners the existing and emerging narrative and purpose. Supporting materials to the Corporate Plan should include a highly visual plan on a page that articulates to internal and external audiences the Council's mission.
12. Finally, during 2019-20, business management reporting is being substantially upgraded in terms of timeliness and quality to help develop a culture of delivery against the agreed priorities and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan. To achieve this goal, an Outcomes Framework was agreed that uses 48 indicators to measure delivery against the Corporate Plan's six priorities and 13 outcomes. This Outcomes Framework forms the basis of the performance element of the new monthly business management report.
13. Updating the Corporate Plan will necessarily require a parallel update to the Outcomes Framework to ensure that the framework accurately describes the priorities and actions in the plan. Alongside updating content, there is an opportunity to continue to improve the Outcomes Framework reflecting feedback and challenge received through the new reporting process. Indicators will be reviewed to ensure that they have a clear and direct line to outcomes and the target setting process will be reviewed to ensure that the reasons for changing or maintaining a target across years are transparent.

### **Next Steps**

14. The draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 will be considered at the same time as budget proposals throughout the scrutiny and decision-making process. This is to allow budget and priorities to be considered in tandem.
15. That timetable is summarised as follows:

5 Sept 2019	PSC <sup>1</sup>	Briefing on proposals to revise Corporate Plan.
17 Sept 2019	Cabinet	Initial service & Resource Planning Report.
12 Dec 2019	PSC	Considers and comments upon the proposed pressures and savings, and progress towards revised Corporate Plan.
19 Dec	Cabinet	Service & Resource Planning Report to Cabinet, update on the latest financial position and progress towards revised Corporate Plan.
9 Jan 2020	PSC	Reviews revised Corporate Plan. Considers and

<sup>1</sup> Performance Scrutiny Committee

		comment on draft capital proposals, Review of Charges and Treasury Management Strategy.
21 Jan 2020	Cabinet	Cabinet proposes revised Corporate Plan, 2020/21 revenue budget, MTFP capital programme and Corporate Plan for recommendation to Council in light of comments from the Performance Scrutiny Committee and consultation feedback. Includes the Review of Charges.
11 Feb 2020	Council	Agrees revised Corporate Plan 2020-21/2022-23, Revenue Budget 2020/21; Capital Programme 2019/20 - 2029/20 and MTFP 2020/21 - 2023/24.

16. In recent years it has been the practice to seek support in the development of a Corporate Plan supported by the whole council through engagement with a cross-party working group. It is proposed that this exercise is repeated, focussing on the new priorities first before engaging on any changes to format and the re-development of the Outcomes Framework.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

17. There are no direct financial or staffing impacts arising from this report. Resources required to meet any proposals for change developed during the revision process will be identified through the parallel service and resource planning process.

### **Equalities Implications**

18. The Corporate Plan seeks to ensure that all residents are treated equally and looks to address inequalities where they exist. Where any of the proposals developed involve changes to service or service delivery, equality implications will need to be considered throughout the development process and formally, through Service and Community Impact Assessments as required.

CLAIRE TAYLOR  
Assistant Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Robin Rogers, Strategy Manager  
September 2019

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	NOTES
<b>7 November 2019</b>	
Review of Mental Health Social Work services and contracts	To scrutinise the County Council's mental health activity and spending including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Section 75 partnership agreement between OHFT and OCC covering the delivery of social work and the outcomes of transferring social work staff back into the council for the delivery of mental health assessments, including an overview of s.117 funding, team performance and numbers of clients supported.</li> <li>b) Mental health Outcomes Based Contract between OHFT and OCCG (which OCC contribute funding towards) covering the delivery of all mental health support to people with particular conditions, including inpatient care, community support, wellbeing and employment services, housing and Care Act assessed social care needs</li> </ul>
Highways Deep Dive follow-up	To receive an update on implementing the recommendations of the Highways Deep Dive
HMICFRS Action Plan	To consider the action plan that has been developed in response to the HMICFRS Inspection of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
Serious Case Review	To receive a report about a serious case review and mental health homicide review
Business Monitoring Report	To consider the monthly business monitoring report.
<b>12 December 2019</b>	
Business Monitoring Report	To consider the monthly business monitoring report.
Corporate Plan (provisional)	To consider the revised Corporate Plan for 2020-2021
<b>10 January 2020</b>	
Corporate Plan (provisional)	To consider the revised Corporate Plan for 2020-2021
<b>14 March 2020</b>	



<b>TO BE SCHEDULED</b>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Use of s.106 monies	Update on progress since the PSC deep dive into s.106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.
Investment Strategy	Scrutiny of the Council's Investment Strategy prior to consideration by Council
Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan	Scrutiny of the Council's overall transport vision, goals and objectives to support population and economic growth.
Plans to tackle roadside NO2 concentrations	Council's approach to dealing with the impact of national policy to tackle roadside NO2 concentrations on Oxfordshire's transport network/ road infrastructure (i.e. ending the sale of diesel/petrol cars by 2040)
Strategic drivers	How the council is meeting its identified strategic risks, including council transformation and culture change, its relationship with external partners, building communities, etc.
Income generation	Scrutiny of the council's principles in relation to income generation, the opportunities available to the Authority and plans for increased income generation.
Ofsted inspection response	Scrutiny of the actions the Council is planning to take in response to the findings of the inspection into local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers.
Turning Point Contract	To review and scrutinise the Turning Point Contract
Council workforce	How the Council is meeting its Investors in People standard, ensuring its workforce is diverse and representative of local communities, and building workforce resilience, including its relationship with Unison.
Priority Delivery Plans	Directors will share their priorities within the overarching delivery plans and service plans.
Young Carers	Review of progress in relation to the recommendations from the Young Carers' scrutiny deep dive and the impact of moving the Young Carers Service into the Family Solutions Service.
Key worker housing	A report on progress with addressing housing and affordability issues in Oxfordshire as one of the biggest barriers to attracting key workers for the care workforce.

Safeguarding Missing Children	An update on the number of children reported as missing from home, care and school in Oxfordshire and the work undertaken by the Missing Children's Panel and partners.
The Council's role as an Accountable Body	To gain a greater understanding of the Council's role as an accountable body particularly in relation to the Growth Board and Local Enterprise Partnership.

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## **JOINT AUDIT & GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY (TRANSFORMATION) SUB-COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 July 2019 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.00 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair  
Councillor Paul Buckley  
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Councillor Charles Mathew  
Councillor Glynis Phillips

**By invitation:** Peter Marsden and Tim Spiers, Entec Si

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive; Claire Taylor, Interim Assistant Chief Executive; Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Item 8 Will Harper, Interim Head of ICT; Nicholas Brownlow, Digital Services Manager

*The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**15/19 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2019/20**

(Agenda Item. 1)

Councillor Mike Fox-Davies moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Liz Brighthouse be elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED: that Councillor Liz Brighthouse be elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.**

**16/19 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2019/20**

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillor Liz Brighthouse moved and Councillor Tony Ilott seconded that Councillor Nick Carter be elected Deputy Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED: that Councillor Nick Carter be elected Deputy Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.**

The Chairman noted that she would prefer if the Chairman and Deputy Chairman could be titled Co-Chairs but the Constitution did not allow for that. The Chief Executive responded that she would take it up with the Law and Governance Section.

**17/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda Item. 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Carter.

**18/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE**

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

**19/19 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 5)

The minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2019 were approved and signed.

**20/19 ICT DIGITAL STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Claire Taylor introduced two representatives from consultants Entec Si, Peter Marsden and Tim Spiers, who have been working with OCC's Head of ICT on the ICT health check and in designing a new strategy. She described how ICT is central to the business case for transformation. With £12m per annum spent on ICT and significant capital expenditure, it is important to have a clear strategy going forward.

Peter Marsden led the presentation. Entec Si has 25 years of experience working with local authorities as well as the NHS, not-for-profit and business sectors. The development of a strategy is still in the early stages. It will tie in with the Council's values and corporate plan.

Technology changes very quickly – for example over 50% of transactions now take place via mobile phones – but it is important to get the foundations right.

Officers and consultants responded to issues raised by Members as follows:

- The ability is there to allow tracking of versions of documents but a roadmap is needed for its introduction and communication.
- The strategy will have an implementation plan to ensure that change is planned.
- The “health check” was needed to determine what equipment and systems are in place now. Then moving forward the strategy will bring order to future developments and avoid different sections going in different directions.
- Non-IT options will continue to be available to residents– primarily by telephone.
- The carbon footprint reductions indicated on Agenda Page 37 are overall reductions and are not the result of transferring carbon emissions to external providers. Providers can achieve much greater economies of scale.
- The level of security on the Cloud is much higher that the Council could achieve itself. The Ministry of Defence is on the Cloud. Tens of thousands of attempts at cyber attacks are made each day (not specifically aimed at the Council) and they are successfully blocked.
- Most security incidents are due to human actions rather than the technology. Everyone needs to remain vigilant. Training for councillors is already planned.
- Officers will check the situation regarding insurance.

Members also made the following suggestions:

- Primary schools could be a resource to help harness the IT skills of young people in helping people who are less confident – something which could also help tackle loneliness.
- The remaining maintained schools also need to be considered in the strategy. OFSTED has been critical of record-keeping for safeguarding issues. Solutions might then be sold on to non-maintained schools – even nursery schools are now spending a lot of money on IT.
- The Council's systems need to be able to talk to others such as the police, hospitals and schools to ensure that everyone has the most up to date information.

The officers and consultants thanked Members for their feedback which will be taken on board in developing the strategy.

## **21/19 QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (APRIL TO JUNE 2019)**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Claire Taylor introduced the report which outlines the situation at six months into a 3 to 5 year programme. The focus in the last quarter has been on finance, strategic capability and the provision cycle.

A proposed dashboard is included as Annex 1 in order to get feedback from Members of the Committee before it is circulated to all Members.

Officers responded to Members questions as follows:

- It was made clear from the start that a reduction in staff numbers was part of the planned savings. Redundancies will be minimised by means of redeployment where possible and all proper HR processes will be followed. It is not possible to even put a ballpark figure on related costs at this stage.
- The first transformation changes in terms of service redesign will be the consultation on the Council's Finance function due to start shortly with a briefing for around 50 staff involved. The unions will be included in the consultation which will be completed by September.
- The Finance changes focus on development of a new customer offer, enabling the council more effectively by a greater focus on income generation and commercialisation as well as a more consistent and higher standard of financial management
- The partnership with Hampshire is not part of this but it will be re-examined when the time is right.
- Under the Finance review partnership initial opportunities with Cherwell District Council have been identified with a joint head of procurement appointed and a shared internal audit function planned from April 2020.
- Reports can show savings against costs but increased efficiencies achieved are not always measurable in pounds.
- The changes in family safeguarding have not been part of the transformation programme. Other changes will continue to be made across the organisation as opportunities arise.
- While the Council avails of consultant advice, our own staff are being upskilled at the same time. Entec Si was specifically selected as IT consultants because of their record on business engagement.

The following suggestions were made by Members for future reports:

- Reports should say more about increasing demand for services, societal change and unbudgeted new requirements such as mental health services for young people up to 25 years of age.
- Where tables and pie charts show percentages, it would be good to show the total figure as well, so the scale can be assessed.

**22/19 FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME**

(Agenda Item. 9)

The revised and new dates for future meetings and items for discussion were agreed as outlined in the Work Programme.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

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